



Life of  
**Śri Brahmatantra Swatantra Jîyar**  
and his  
**Divya Sûri Stuti**



Śrīmad Vêdānta Deśika Vihāra Sabha  
Śri Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmy Math  
Mysore



B-17





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श्री ब्रह्मतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रस्वामि विरचित  
दिव्यसूरि स्तुतिः

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Krishna Vilas Road, Mysore 570 024

**May 2013**

**Published by:**

Śrīmad Vêdānta Deśika Vihāra Sabha  
Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi Maṭh  
Mysore - 570024

In association with,

Rāmānuja Matha Samrakshana Samithi  
Shāntigramā, Hāssan, Karnāṭaka - 573220

First Edition

**Date of Publication**  
Vijaya Samvatsara  
May 2013

ISBN : 81-89650-27-0

**Printed at:**

**Navbharath Press**  
"Vishnu Chittam",  
No 10, Sirur Park 'B' Street  
Seshadripuram, Bangalore- 560 020  
Ph: 080-2356 1142, E-mail: navbarat@gmail.com

# **Life of Śri Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and his Divya Sūri Stuti**

## **This work contains:**

The life of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar- based on the Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam;

The Divya Sūri Stuti with detailed notes, traditional dates and important details on the lives of Âḷvārs and Âchāryas- based on the Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam.

## **Cover Picture:**

The scintillating Archā Vighram of Śri Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar (with the right hand in the 'Upadesha Mudra') adorning the sacred sanctum of the Parakāla Swāmi Maṭh, Mysore.

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Price: Rs. 300/- (Overseas US \$ 30)

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श्री

**Śrīmad Vêdānta Deśika Vihāra Sabha  
Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla  
Swāmi Maṭṭha Publication**

- Śrīkāryakārtha  
Mahāmahopādhyāya, Vāgdevivaraputra,  
Dr. A.S. Venkatanathan

**Editorial Board for this publication:**

- Disciple of H.H. Śrīvan Satakopa Nārāyana Yatindra  
Mahādesikan  
Śrī Sadagopan Iyengar, Coimbatore
- Sthāneekam of Melukote  
Āgama Praveena Dr. Shalva Pille Iyengar,  
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In Love and Memory of  
Dearest “Appa”

*Śri Kollegal Ramaswamy Sreenath*

25 October 1941 – 1 July 2011

*You left us to attain the abode of the Divya Sūris,  
but your love constantly nourishes us!*

In Love and Memory of

Dearest "Appa"

St. Kollegal Ramanaswamy Swamikal

22 October 1941 - 1 May 2011

You left us to begin the end of the Great Journey

but your love continues to watch us



श्रीः

श्रीमते ब्रह्मतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रपरकालगुरुपरम्परायै नमः

श्रीमते श्रीलक्ष्मीहयवदनदिव्यपादुकासेवक

श्रीमदभिनववागीशब्रह्मतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रपरकालमहादेशिकाय नमः

विगाहे तीर्थबहुलां शीतलां गुरुसन्ततिम्।

श्रीनिवासदयाम्भोधि परीवाहपरम्पराम्॥

The omniscient, omnipresent, sempiternal, blemishless and infinitely benevolent Lord Sriman NARayana is the antaryami of all sentient and insentient beings and is forever in the company of his consort, the ever merciful and compassionate Sri Maha Lakshmi. For the emancipation of baddha jivas like us from the drudgery and vanity of this life, the Lord, out of his infinite compassion, has blessed us with various sacred scriptures where He proclaims that Bhakti and Prapatti are the ways to attain Him and pledges that He would always protect the ones who surrender themselves unto Him.

The endeavors undertaken by the Lord for the sake of our redemption are many. He incarnated as Hayagriva and Hamsa in earlier kalpas to preach and protect the vedas. He came down as RAMa, Krishna and VyAsa to elucidate and exemplify its essence. He gave us the PAncharAthra through Periya PirAtti to instruct us on how to worship and attain Him. In Kali yuga, He comes as Azhwars and AchAryas to demonstrate the way of devotion and provide us an easy path for liberation.

The scriptures are unanimous in their proclamation of the efforts the Lord takes to deliver us from our karma. The JayAkhyā Samhita says "साक्षान्नारायणो देवः कृत्वा मर्त्यमर्या

तनुम्।मग्नानुद्धरते लोकान् कारुण्याच्छास्त्रपाणिना॥“.

Out of His infinite mercy, the same Lord Sriman NArAyanA who holds shastras (weapons) descends down as AchAryas with shAstras (sacred scriptures). Swami PeriyAzhwaR says “பீதகவாடை பிரானார் பிரமகுருவாகி வந்து” (plthaka Adai pirAnAr piramaguruvAgi vandhu) – plthAmbara vastra dhAri, the Lord, comes as the AchArya.

It may seem rather redundant to have an AchArya when one has the yearning for the Lord, access to His teachings and the willingness of the Lord Himself to accept those who desire Him. While it seems plausible to attain liberation by mere knowledge of the scriptures, it is, in reality, a most formidable task even for the most erudite. The scriptures themselves declare that the knowledge gained by reading them is meaningful only when heard from an AchArya “आचार्यात् इत्यधीते नियमविधिरसौ निश्चितो नीतिविद्धिः”. It is for the same reason that vedAs mandate that one should have an AchArya and stay at his refuge: “आचार्यवान् भवेत्” “आचार्यवान् पुरुषो वेद”.

The infinite enigmatic ways in which an AchArya guides and guards a sishya, from initiation to deliverance at the lotus feet of the Divya Dampathis, are beyond comprehension.

In Thiruvaimozhi (Anjiraya MadanArAi dashakam, TVM 1-4), Swami NammAzhwaR, as ParAnkusha nAyaki in nAyika bhAvam sends messengers to Lord. Through these 10 messengers Swami NammAzhwar conveys the 10 qualities of AchArya PurushAs. In his DramidOpanishad tAtparya ratnAvali (DTR), Swami Desikan explains these 10 qualities as below:

सद्धीभव्यान् सुवाचः सुचरितसुभगान् कृष्णसारूप्यसौम्यान्  
 स्वाहारोदारशीलान् तनुधृतभगवल्लक्ष्मणो बाल्यगुमान्।  
 छात्रस्वच्छन्दवृत्तीनभिगतशिशिरानन्तरङ्गोक्तियोग्यान्  
 आचार्यान् कृपालब्धाववृणुत शठजित् प्रेयसीदूतनीत्या॥

The guna and the bird chosen by Swami Nammazhwar are as below:

Messenger Chosen by Nammaazhwaar	Quality of AchArya in DTR	Description
Crane (madanArAi)	sadriBhavyAn	Like the crane is always seen in the company of its mate, AchAryas are always united with the Lord in thoughts
Nightingale (kuyilgAI)	suvAchaH	Like the nightingale AchAryas have nectarine voices and interpret sweet Sri Sookthis for the ears of sishyAs.
Swan (annangAI)	sucharitasubhagAn	Like the beautiful walking style, AchAryas have exemplary SadAchAram and anushtAnams
ChakravAka Birds (anRilgAI)	krishna sAroopya sowmyAn	The chakravAka pakshi is blue in colour, which is the color of our Lord, conveying his sowlabhyam
Sarasa pakshi (kurugE)	swAhAra udhArasheelAn	Like the kuruhu bird which are always eager to find food for their children, AchAryas enjoy the Lord and share that enjoyment with their sishyAs through UpadEsam.

Bees (aazhivarivaNde)	hanudrutha bhagavalakshma naH	Bees have marks in the form of lines suggesting a disc . AchAryas like the bees bear the chinhams of Lord - Shanku and chakram. Chakram conveys manas tatwam and Conch conveys buddhi tatwam. They are ekAgra chittas on Lord and bless the sishyas to have the same.
Young Parrot (iLankiLi)	bAlya guptAn	AchAryas like parrots have the bhaavam of the children.They never boast about their greatness and glories.
SArika pakshi (sirupUvAi)	chAtra swachanda vruthIn	SARika pakshi is nourished by the food lovingly presented by its master. AchAryas are nourished by the dhravyam presented by their loving sishyAs.
Chill Breeze (vAdai)	Abhigathashi shirAn	AchAryas like cool breeze bless the SishyAs with their cool grace
Mind (aazhi mada Nenje)	antharangOkthi yOgyAn	Mind represents the quality of intimate relationship with its master. AchAryas like mind are very close (antharangam) to both sishya and Lord

Due to these aparimita hita which an AchArya does to a sishya, ShAndilya smriti declares - ब्रह्मविद्याप्रदानस्य देवैरपि न शक्यते प्रतिप्रदानम्” Even the devas do not know how to do pratyupakAra to the guru who imparts the knowledge of the brahman”. Swami Desikan echoes the same thought in SishyakrutyAdhikAram of his magnum opus Srimad Rahasya Traya Saaram: “ஏற்றி மனத்து எழில் ஞானவிளக்கை இருளனைத்தும் மாற்றினவர்க்கு ஒரு கைமாறு மாயனும் காண்கில்லான்” (eRRi manaththezhil jnAnaviLakkai iruLanaiththum mARRinavarkku oru kaimAru mAyanum kANagillAn-Even the omniscient Supreme Lord does not know how to repay an AchArya). Swami further states that the only way for a sishya to repay is to eulogise and revere the glory of his AchArya “போற்றி உகப்பதும் புந்தியில் கொள்வதும் பொங்குபுகழ் சாற்றிவளர்ப்பதும் சற்றல்லவோ முன்னம் பெற்றதற்கே.” poRRi ugappathum punthiyil koLvathum pongupugazh sARRi vaLarppathum saRRallavo munnam peRRathaRke). The vedas also mandate that a sishya should always chant his guru's name ‘गुरु नाम सदा जपेत्’.

An ardent sishya regards his AchArya as superior to even the Lord Himself. Swami Deshika claims that this is the most righteous way for a sishya: “தொல் வழியே நல்வழிகள் துணிவார்கட்கே” (tholvazhiyE nalvazhigaL thuNivArkatke). MadhurakaviAzhwar vows that he know no other God but Swami NammAzhwAr, his AchArya: “தேவுமற்றறியேன்” (thEvu maRRaRiyEn). Swami Deshika also declares that even the supreme and peerless Lord is neither greater nor equal to the AchArya who has Lord Hayagreeva seated on the tip of their tongue. “अध्यासीनतुरङ्गवक्त्रविलसत्तिहाग्रसिंहासनात्। आचार्यादिह देवतां समधिकां अन्यां न मन्यामहे॥”.

The vedas instruct that a sishya must also know his AchArya's guru parampara starting from the AchArya all the way upto Lord Sriman Narayana ("स च आचार्य वंशो ज्ञेयः", "आचार्याणां असावसाविति आभगवत्तः"). Smrutis too declare "गुरुन् प्रणम्य प्रथः तद्गुरुं ततो हरिम्", one should worship his Guru and through his prAchArya till Hari. Swami Deshikan stresses the same idea in his mangala shloka of GuruparamparA sAram "गुरुभ्यः तद्गुरुभ्यश्च नमो वाकमधीमहे। वृणीमहे च तत्रायौ दम्पतीजगदाम्पति॥". This guruparamparA anusandhAnam can also be done starting from Lord down until our immediate AchArya as mentioned in the shruti "आभगवत्तः". Swami Deshikan has done anushtAnam in this way "आभगवत्तः प्रथितामनघामाचार्यसन्ततिं वन्दे".

Just like the 3 types of karmas prescribed in the shastras (nitya, naimittika and kAmya), AchArya paramparAnusandhAnam can also be performed in 3 ways: It is nitya as non-performance of it would result in detrimental effects - "गुरुं प्रकाशयेद्दीमान् मन्त्रं यत्नेन गोपयेत्। अप्राकशप्रकाशाभ्यां क्षीयेते सम्पदायुषी।". It is naimittika (done for a specific purpose) since it is prescribed as a prAyaschitta for one who speaks to those who should not be spoken to "संभाष्यपुण्यकृतो मनसाध्यायेत्". It is anishiddha kAmyaphalaprada (granting the shastraically acceptable wishes) such as jnAna "यस्य देवे परा भक्तिः यथा देवे तथा गुरौ। तस्यैते कथिताह्वर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः॥". It is therefore imperative that Guru ParamparAnusandhAnam is performed every ardent sishya.

This injunction of the scriptures has been a blissful constant followed in its purest form unfalteringly by all the preceptors of the glorious lineage of the paramavaidika-SrlvaiShNava-SrlsampradAya that springs forth from the lotus feet of the divine couple. While several masters have chosen to include

such devoted references to embellish the commencement of their erudite compositions, others have chosen to compose the very sacred biographies of their masters as their literary masterpieces. Walking the lines of these biographies would be to live through the glorious moments of their time, recounting the history of their extraordinary life and edification of tradition.

The infallible and illuminating lives of great personalities like Srl rAmAnuja and swAmy vEdAntadESika had such enduring effects that they impressed upon the likes of several great preceptors who came subsequent to them to narrate their sacred life accounts and towering accomplishments to ornate and elaborate scales.

One such is the composition of the great Srl brahmatantraswatantra jeeyar, a direct disciple of swAmy vEdAntadESika. This great preceptor, who beamed as a true epitome of discipleship, out of immanent compassion for posterity, composed the divyasUristuti celebrating the splendor of the preceptoral lineage commencing from the Lord and culminating at the glories of swAmy nayanArAchArya.

The preceptors who adorned the pontifical high seat of Srl parakAla maTam subsequent to Srl brahmatantraswatantra jeeyar, who was the first sanyasta AchArya, have followed this tradition more elaborately.

Srl dviteeya brahmatantraswatantra jeeyar composed an exhaustive account of the sacred biographies of the masters of yore in his work pannirAyirappaDi guruparamparA prabhAvam (12000 paDi). Owing to our misfortune, this work that has been singularly celebrated as one with an ineffable charm and grandeur has not withstood the onslaughts of time.

Following on the same lines, we come upon the mUvAyirappaDi guruparamparA prabhAvam (3000 paDi) composed by Srl tRutIya brahmatantraswatantra jeeyar. From beginning to end, the work is harmoniously blending in single prose or verse narration reflecting the life accounts of the

sacred lineage with factual material supplemented by genealogies, chronologies, dates, traditions, inscriptions, laudatory verses and auto-biographical citations. The work, known for its pleasant rigor is composed in the lilting style of maNipravaLam which is a delightful blend of tamizh and samskRutam, in a vocabulary replete with terse sAmpradAyiC terms, often bringing about a high degree of challenge for the common man to comprehend.

With the noble intention of making the content of this grantha reachable to those who do not have sufficient training in sampradayic language, especially the younger generation, Sri Adviteeya and Smt Chaitanya have done a yeoman service of writing this book which brings out the entire Guru Parampara charitram from Azhwars through Swami RAmAnuja and Swami Vedantha Deshika.

The book has 2 parts : Guru Parampara and Divya Suri Stuti. The former part details the history and glories of AchAryas preceding Sri Brahmatantra Swatantra Jeeyar in its first section, and of those contemporary and later to Brahmatantra Swatantra Jeeyar in the second. Finally in the appendix, elaborate commentaries on thaniyans of Swami Deshikan and Sri Brahmatantra Swatantra Jeeyar are provided.

While explaining the divine charitrams of azhwars and AchAryas, the authors have quoted extensively on pramAnas from various pUrvAchArya's works with lucid and simple translation. The authors have been diligent to include notes where esoteric rahasyArthAs are involved, so that interested readers may learn about those from a satsampradAya sadAchArya.

One of the chief highlights of this work is the presentation of Swami Deshikan's DinAchArya as recorded by Swami Kumara VaradAchArya. The illustrious son of Swami dEsika has recorded his daily anushtanams. This composition when read with pure devotion would definitely make the readers feel that

“jnAna vairAgya bhUshana” title to Swami Deshikan is very much apt!

The tireless efforts which the authors have put to obtain the manuscripts from various sources definitely is more than laudable. Their dedication and perseverance in getting access to the ancient inscription, from the archives of ASI, of Kanchi VaradarAjaswAmi temple about the Lord's Seventh instruction appointing Brahmatantra Swatantra Jeeyar as the next RAmAnuja Siddhantha Pravarthaka after Swami Deshikan and KumAra VaradAchArya is noteworthy. This inscription must be preserved as a treasure for all generations to come. Their staunch faith in and reverence towards the Guru Parampara is evident throughout the book.

The idea of presenting the AchArya parampara using flow charts is praiseworthy. This would serve as a ready reckoner to understand and recollect the sambandham of the AchArya – both in terms of bandhutvam (relationship) and sishyatvam (studenthood). Every such chart would help the bhAgawathAs to have the anubhavam of 'अनघ आचार्यसन्ततिं वन्दे'

The section “Glossary of Traditional Terms” would be very handy for any Srivaishnava to get familiar with the paribhAsha used in the temples and sannithis of AchAryAs.

The various rare photos presented in this book would definitely provide a visual feast to the readers.

The authors have left no stone unturned to make the contents of the book reachable to all audiences. They have provided English transliteration to all sanskrit/tamil quotes, ensuring that the readers do not miss out on the nectarine words of our purvAchAryAs.

In the section Divya Suri Stuti, the authors have given their best to bring out the anubhavam of Sri Brahmatantra Swatantra Jeeyar as per गुरुं प्रकाशयेत् धीमान् मन्त्रं यत्नेन गोपयेत्. In the introduction to this section, the detailed notes provided

by the authors on the necessity of AchArya bhakti and various qualities of AchAryAs would help any disciple to admire at their AchAryAs with the anubhavam of these gunams. The qualities of a disciple are also detailed in this section which would help the readers to imbibe the same.

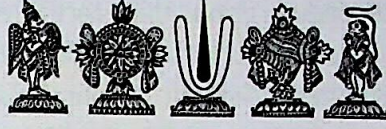
Those who do anusandhAnam of the Divya Suri Stuti daily as mentioned in its phala shruti, would become vaishnavottamas and would enjoy the bliss of nitya vibhUti with the anugrahams of their AchAryas, as indicated by Sri Brahmatantra Swatantra Jeeyar Swami.

Perusal of this book would be to enjoy the cool and comforting waters of the river of AchAryaparampara, which by itself is a flow of Daya of the Supreme Lord Sriman NArAyana.

We pray at the lotus feet of Sri Lakshmi HayagrIvan to bless the authors with physical and mental strength, so as to indulge in more such kaimkaryams bringing out the nectarine works of our pUvAchAryas for the benefit of bhAgawathAs.

sarvam ShriIkRiShNArpaNamastu

With folded hands and prayers,  
dAsan  
Achutharaman Rangachari,  
C G Balaji,  
Sudarshan Srinivasan,  
C G Sampath Kumar.



## Preface

*Śrī Lakshmi Hayavadana Parabrahmane Namaha //*  
*Śrīmathe Rāmānujāya Namaha //*  
*Śrīmathe Nigamantha Mahādeśikāya Namaha //*  
*Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Mahādeśikāya Namaha //*  
*Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Guruparamparāyai Namaha //*  
*Śrīmad Abhinava Vāgeesha Brahmatantra Swatantra Mahādeśikāya Namaha //*

जयतु श्रीहयवदनो लक्ष्मीनारायणश्च जयतु तरां ।  
जयतु च सहगुरुपङ्क्त्या परकालश्रीमठीयनित्यश्रीः ॥

jayatu śrīhayavadanō lakṣmīnārāyaṇaśca jayatu tarāṃ .  
jayatu ca sahaḡurupaṅktyā parakālaśrīmaṭhīyanityaśrīḥ ..

*"Glory to Śrī Hayavadana and to Lakshmi Nārāyana!  
May there be all-surpassing glory and beyond!  
Glory also be to the Guruparampara of the  
Parakāla Śrī Matam and to its eternal prosperity!"*

Śrīmad Abhinava Vāgeesha Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, the 36<sup>th</sup> Āchārya currently adorning the Mahā Peetam (the great sacred pedestal) of the ancient Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi Matam, has graciously blessed us with the Pancha Samskāras and Mantrārtha Rahasyās. Little did we realize, until then, the importance of the lineage of preceptors or 'Guruparampara' that has preserved these ancient and precious doctrinal secrets and handed them down through a time period of thousands of years, for the benefit of devotees! The primal doctrinal truths imparted by Lord Śrīman

Nārāyana have descended upon this earth and have then been transmitted in an impeccable and unbroken fashion through the Âchārya-Sishya Parampara right from Nammālvār, through Nāthamuni and Yāmunāchārya to Rāmānujāchārya; and then again through Tiru Kurugai Pirān Pillān, Kidāmbi Ācchan and Kidāmbi Appullār to Vêdānta Deśika.

Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar was the foremost disciple of Śrī Vêdānta Deśika. This great Âchārya, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, plays a pivotal role in the unbroken transmission of our Sampradāyam (or tradition). It was Varadarāja Perumāl Himself who ordained Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar to be the upholder of the Rāmānuja Darshanam! As per the command of Lord Varadarāja and Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar established a Matam at Kanchi around the year 1359 C.E. This Matam came to be popularly known as the Parakāla Matam.

Being a direct disciple of Śrī Vêdānta Deśika, Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi occupies a central position in the carrying forward of the doctrinal truths of the Śrī Bhāshya and Bhagavad Vishayam to the present day. He is the 'Pradhāna Âchārya' or 'Foremost Preceptor' for all the followers of Rāmānuja Siddhānta of the post-Deśika period. He is therefore called as 'Rāmānuja Siddhānta Sthāpana Âchārya' or 'the preceptor who firmly established the doctrine of Rāmānuja'. His importance does not stop there- he is also the 'Moola Âchārya' or the 'Primary Preceptor' for all the followers of the Deśika Sampradāyam. In fact, it was he who established the Deśika Sampradāyam! Over the last 650 years and more, the disciplinic successors of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar have been preserving an ancient impeccable tradition.

This work is an attempt to portray, in a clear manner, the facts relating to Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, his life, his divinity, his

works and his immense contributions in upholding the Rāmānuja Matham. The work traces the manner in which the doctrine of Vēdānta as taught by Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa have been re-established and preserved through the means of an unbroken tradition that continues to the present day. It is also an attempt to highlight the glory of the Parakāla Swāmi Matam and that of the principal deity Śrī Lakshmi Hayavadana, adorning the sacred sanctum of this Mahā Peetam. This work also illumines the glorious lives of Âḷvārs and Âchāryas. It presents facts as revealed by authoritative sources, without altering the information therein.

This work has been composed keeping in mind those devotees who have faith, who are endowed with an unbiased vision, who rely upon available proof ‘Pramānam’ and wish to know the glory of Âḷvārs and Âchāryas as recounted in traditional sources! It has been written for the satisfaction of the inquisitiveness of those devotees who wish to listen to the glories of the ‘Sat-Sampradāya’ or ‘impeccable tradition’ that has preserved the doctrine of Rāmānuja through the teachings of Śrī Vēdānta Deśika. It has also been composed to clearly elucidate certain important facts pertaining to the life and works of Swāmi Vēdānta Deśika according to traditional sources; thereby completely extirpating many erroneous and distorted facts that have been previously presented in this regard.

This work has been taken up and completed as a fulfillment of the divine commandment of our Âchārya Śrīmad Abhinava Vāgeesha Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar. Having been blessed with his Śrīpāda Tirtha and with his nectarine teachings pertaining to the doctrinal truths, we attempt to put into record the glory of Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi!

This work comprises of four parts.

## **1. Prologue: The descent of the Guruparampara**

The work begins with a prologue, which essentially traces the manner in which the spiritual succession starting from Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa leads to Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi. This section also highlights the great contribution of Lord Varadarāja in ensuring the firm establishment of the Vêdānta doctrine according to the teachings of Rāmānuja.

It must however be remembered that nearly one thousand years have elapsed since Rāmānuja graced this earth. The glory of his numerous disciples has spread out like the branches of a huge tree. Every branch finally traces its origin to Rāmānuja, the Emperor among ascetics, and it is he who shines as the central gem. It is beyond the scope of this book to discuss the glory of all the great branches of Rāmānuja's disciples. The focus here is on the traditional continuity into one foremost branch involving Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar.

## **2. The Life of Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar**

The second section deals with the life of Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar. The Jīyar eternally served at the feet of his Âchārya Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika. For this reason, the life and pastimes of the Jīyar are so closely associated with the life and pastimes of Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika. In recounting the life of the Jīyar, many events in the life of Swāmi Deśika are to be highlighted as well because they bear a direct correlation. We have brought out the finer details of all those events in Swāmi Deśika's life that have a connection with Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi. And in doing this, few other significant events that occurred in the life of Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika may have been left out. Readers will have to keep this in mind.

We have primarily referred to various ancient texts and documents available in the library of Parakāla Swāmi Matam. We have also

relied on traditional information preserved in the archives of the Matam, and therefore this work reconciles all available published and hitherto unpublished material with respect to the life of Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi.

The Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam composed by Triteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi is one of the primary texts we have consulted for information presented in this section. The following versions have been referred to:

- 1) Srimad Triteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Sheidarulina Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam; a condensed version in Manipravalam language printed in Telugu script; edited by Śrīman Nootana Durgam Śrīnivasa Raghavachar under the directions of Śrī Śrī Krishna Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Maha Deśikan; published by Śrī Rāmānuja Ayyangar; printed at Śrīnivasa Press, Mahisurapura (Mysore); Virodhi Krit Samvatsara 1911; Ashada Krishna Dashami.
- 2) Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam in Tamil Script; published by LIFCO; 2-10-1968

Triteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi himself mentions that the source of information for his own work was two prior works;

- 1) Pannirāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam (12,000 Padi) composed by his Âchārya Dviteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi; and
- 2) Prabandha Nirvāha of Tirumalai Śrīnivasāchārya, the direct disciple of Vēdānta Deśika

Unfortunately, these two works are not extant now. The Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam quotes select Ślokas from the Pannirāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam. These few Sanskrit verses have been quoted with translation in our present work.

The works of Śrī Kumāra Varadāchārya also serve as a rich source of information pertaining to the events in the life of his father Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika. The Vêdānta Deśika Mangalāshasanam, Vêdānta Deśika Vighraha Dhyanam, Vêdānta Deśika Prarthana Ashtakam, Vêdānta Deśika Prapatti, Vêdānta Deśika Dinacharya and Pillai Antādi are the relevant works that have been consulted.

Two other very important sources that deal with the life of Śrī Vêdānta Deśika have to be mentioned.

- 1) The Saptati Ratna Mālīka, a hymn in Sanskrit, comprising of 76 verses, composed by Prativādi Bhayankaram Annan. The importance of this work is highlighted by the fact that this was composed around the 14<sup>th</sup> Century by Annan who lived almost contemporaneously with Śrī Vêdānta Deśika and was a direct disciple of Śrī Nainār Âchārya, the son of Vêdānta Deśika. We therefore obtain an authentic view about the life and glory of Vêdānta Deśika from this work. Several verses of this work have been published in both versions of the Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam listed above.
- 2) Vêdānta Deśika Vaibhava Prakāshika, another hymn in Sanskrit, comprising of 167 stanzas, composed by Koil Kandādaī Chandamārutham Mahāchārya of Sholingur. This scholar, Mahāchārya, was born in the Vādhula Gotra lineage of Śrī Bhāshya Simhāsanādhipati Swāmi Mudaliyāndān (or Dasarathi), the nephew of Rāmānuja. He was also called as

Doddāchārya. Mahāchārya lived between C.E. 1509 to 1591 and was a contemporary of great Śree Vaishnava Âchāryas such as Upanishad Bhāshyakāra Ranga Rāmānuja Muni, Pancha Matha Bhanjana Tatāchārya, Tāllapāka Tiruvengadanātha (also called Chinnanna, who was the grandson of Tāllapāka Annamāchārya) and such others. Mahāchārya had great regard for Vêdānta Deśika and his works. In fact, the title Chandamārutha was bestowed upon him for his scholarly commentary on the Shatadushani of Śri Vêdānta Deśika.

The 167 stanzas composed by him in praise of Vêdānta Deśika narrate the latter's life in a simple way. The information contained in this work very closely parallels the information presented in the earlier one- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam of Triteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi. The 'Vêdānta Deśika Vaibhava Prakāshika' has been published as an appendix to the 1911 version of the Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam in Telugu script; edited by Śriman Nootana Durgam Srinivasa Raghavachar.

For the details presented in the first section of this book, we have also referred to few other works listed below:

- 1) The Granthopasamhāra of the Alankāramanihāra by Śri Krishna Brahmatantra Parakāla Swami; edited by L Śrinivasacharya; published by His Highness Maharaja of Mysore; printed at Government Branch Press, Mysore; 1917
- 2) Conjeevaram Inscription of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jiyar, article in English, by Śri Ramanatha Ayyar, published in

Epigraphia Indica, Volume XXV, Part vii, July 1940, pages 318 to 326

- 3) The Origin and Growth of Śrī Brahmatantra Parakāla Mutt; N. Desikāchārya; English; printed at The Bangalore Press; 1949
- 4) A number of 'Sannads' belonging to the reign of Wodeyar Kings, in possession of Śrī Parakāla Swāmi Matam
- 5) Śrī Deśika Sambhavana, Seventh Centenary Commemoration Volume; Published by Śrī Venkatesha Sabha, Ramachandra Agrahar, Mysore-4, October 1968
- 6) Śrīmad Vēdānta Deśika Granthamāla; Edited and published by Śrī Kanchi Prativādi Bhayankaram Annangarachariar Swāmi
- 7) The life and works of Śrī Nigamantha Maha Deśikan; Prof A Śrinivasaraghavan; Visishtādvaita Pracharani Sabha, Mylapore, Madras-4
- 8) The Periya Tirumudi Adaivu of Śrī Kandātai Nayan, edited and published by Venkatanarayana Swāmi, Śrī Śriniketana Mudrāksharashāla; 1898
- 9) Sankalpa Suryodaya of Vēkatanātha; Edited by Pandit V. Krishnamacharya, Publication in two parts; The Adyar Library, Madras 1948
- 10) "Desika Prabandham (Uraiyudan)" - Uraiyāsiriyaṛ Śrī U.Ve. Vankeepuram Navaneetham Śrī Ramadesikachar Swami - Oppiliappan Sannidhi; Lifco 1941; 3rd edition published in 1982

- 11) Śrīmad Vêdānta Guru Stotra Manjari; Śrī P. Venkatacharya; Tulasi Thota; Bangalore; An old publication, Sanskrit in Telugu script, Date of publication unclear

### 3. The Divya Sūri Stotra

The third section of this work comprises of the Divya Sūri Stuti (DSS), a work of Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar. This hymn has 23 verses in praise of the Guruparampara. To date, the Tirunakshatrams (birth stars) of various Âḷvārs and Âchāryas are being celebrated in the Parakāla Swāmi Matam according to the information provided by this work. The Muvairappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam gives us further information on how this work came to be composed by Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar. This section provides translation of the work and also gives additional information on Âḷvārs and Âchāryas, drawn out again from text of the Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam (MGP).

We have referred to the following available sources with regard to the Divya Sūri Stuti:

- 1) Divya Sūri Stuti in Grantha Script available as a palm leaf manuscript at the Adyar Library and Research Center; Adyar, Chennai. This old manuscript is complete, comprises three leaves (five pages) with text etched on the front and back of the leaves. A few portions are worm eaten; but the manuscript is mostly in a fair condition. The date of this manuscript is unknown. It carries the old number 29H26; and is currently a part of manuscript bundle 67356. The text from this manuscript has been treated as the original for the purpose of this work.
- 2) Housed safely in the British Library at London is the book 'Śrīman-Nigamāntha-Maha Deśika-viracitah Garuda-

Damdakadayah Grantha; Śrīmad-Varada Deśika-viracitah Śrīmad - Vêdānta Deśika - Mangalasasanadayah; Brahmatantra – Swatantra – Swami - viracitam Divya - Sūri-stotram ca; in Grantha character; with pages [2]+ 78, 22 x 14 cm; published by the Hindu Bhasa Sanjivini Press, in 1874; currently carrying the shelf mark BL 279.12.D.6. We procured a copy of the DSS from here. The book is in a very fragile condition and is currently being restored by the library.

- 3) Stotra Jālamu a book comprising of Ślokas by Vêdānta Deśika and other Âchāryas; in Telugu script; edited by Vangipuram Ramakrishnamacharya; printed at Śrī Saraswathi Nilaya Mudrakshara Shala; 1874. Some Ślokas from this source bear minor variations from the original followed by us.
- 4) The Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam 1911 version in Telugu script, edited by Śrīman Nootana Durgam Śrīnivasa Raghavachar, also carries the verses of the Divya Sūri Stuti in the form of introductory ‘Taniya Ślokas’ at the beginning of each section of the work. Some Ślokas in this work also vary slightly from the original and this variation has been indicated at appropriate places in our work.
- 5) A few Ślokas of the DSS have also found their way into a work called Prapannāmritam- a Sanskrit work dealing with the life of Âṭvārs and Âchāryas, composed much later (16th century) by one Śrī Anantārya. The Ślokas of the DSS quoted by Anantārya in his work Prapannāmritam are - Śloka 6 of DSS in Chapter 103; Śloka 8 of DSS in Chapter 19; Śloka 9 of DSS in Chapter 88; Śloka 11 of DSS in Chapter 93; Śloka 12 DSS in Chapter 96; Śloka 13 of DSS in Chapter

97 and finally Śloka 16 of DSS in Chapter 2 of Prapannāmritam.

- 6) Of note, the book 'Life of Śrī Rāmānuja' by Swāmi Ramakrishnanada, published by Śrī Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras; also quotes Ślokas 2 to 16 of the DSS as an introduction to the life of Âlvārs and Âchāryas.

#### 4. Appendices

The Appendices are designed to provide further information that may be necessary to understand the concepts presented in the first three sections of the book. Some of the major features included in the appendix include- a detailed explanation regarding the traditional birth days of Âlvārs and Âchāryas, a complete catalogue of the works of Vēdānta Deśika and also a full explanation of the inscription Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar at the Kānchipuram Varadarāja temple. We indeed hope that this section enhances the ability to understand the traditional information presented in the earlier part of this book.

It must be noted here that for a general reader, this book may seem to be a narration of 'miracles', events guided by 'divine intervention', the 'revelation' of the divine word, and such other incidents which are not ordinary occurrences. To this, we say that in the eyes of a believer it is not impossible that those of divine descent are indeed capable of divine deeds. This book has been written for the sake of those believers who wish to know the glory of the Âchārya Parampara, as is explained by traditional sources; and not for the sake of convincing non-believers to accept what they are incapable of.

However, we have one additional thing to add. It is not so important to analyze whether or not a certain miracle is possible in as much as

it is important to realize that these noble souls- Âļvārs and Âchāryas- have led a life that is purely and entirely dedicated for the unwavering service of the divine. Every aspect of their lives therefore, whether a journey undertaken, a deed performed, a vision dreamt, a dream fulfilled, or the very path of their life itself; spontaneously takes the form of being associated with the Supreme Lord. It is not the miracles associated with their lives that make them what they are; rather it is the deeds and actions performed by them in a spirit of complete service to the Supreme Lord which makes them worthy of reverence by one and all. Whether one accepts the miracles associated with them or not, the noble deeds accomplished by them stand tall today as testimony to their innate greatness. If one makes the earnest effort to study their works, understand the ideals they stood for, the message they taught and the doctrine they preached, then the divinity in the lives of these noble pure souls becomes self- evident.

On a side note, miracles have been associated with the lives of numerous spiritual teachers who teach 'Hinduism'. There have been extreme examples of those who have portrayed themselves verily as Gods. However it is not correct to group all of them under one bracket. What is it then, which sets apart certain preceptors as unique?

Many spiritual leaders have taught and preached doctrines in accordance with what they like or dislike. They have propounded doctrines according to their individual viewpoints and tastes. But there are those sets of preceptors who have stood up solely for the purpose of teaching the timeless doctrine of Vêda- Vêdānta. The actions and deeds of these preceptors have been dedicated to upholding only the traditional truths and in eulogizing only that Supreme Brahman as taught in the Vêdānta. They have led their lives in complete accordance with those very scriptural truths. This is what

makes these sets of preceptors unique. And this selfless service of theirs towards the Supreme Lord is what sets them apart and makes them worthy of being revered as divinities.

While numerous spiritual leaders have time and again been associated with miracles and super human abilities, the acceptance of a spiritual preceptor as bonafide requires 'Pramānam' what is called 'authority', and a consummation of 'knowledge', 'qualities' and 'precepts'. By dedicating their lives to teaching only the supreme truths of the Vêda- Vêdānta, by considering service unto Lord Śrīman Nārāyana the sole purpose of life, and by pursuing the path of righteousness as taught by the Vêdas for the upliftment of mankind and the benefit of the universe, there are those preceptors who have attained that consummation of knowledge 'Jnāna' and qualities 'Guna'. The precepts they uphold are verily the precepts of the Vêda- Vêdānta. And this is the 'Pramānam' for their divinity.

### **The Publication**

This volume carries the distinction of being the first ever publication of the Divya Sūri Stuti in full, supplemented with English translation. With the help of the Archeological Survey of India, we have recovered and presented the tracing of the ancient Perumāl Koil Inscription of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, dated Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> March, 1359 C.E. This is the first time that the tracing of the inscription is being published in its original characters and original form. This volume also carries the unique distinction of enumerating the divine illustrious lives of the Âḷvārs and Âchāryas, along with their Avatāra Rahasya and traditional dates according to the Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam.

This book is being published by Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi Math, under the auspices of the Vêdānta Deśika Vihāra Sabha in association with the Rāmānuja Matha Samrakshana Samithi. The Vêdānta Deśika Vihāra Sabha was founded by Śrīmad Abhinava Ranganātha Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Deśikan (33<sup>rd</sup> pattam). This sabha has been conducting 'Vidwat Sadas' on Vêda Vêdānta and associated branches and has published numerous works related to this field.

Rāmānuja Matha Samrakshana Samithi is an organization that has been founded to uphold the sacred tenets of the doctrine of Rāmānuja. It was based on the suggestion of our Âchārya Śrīmad Abhinava Vāgeesha Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar that the Samithi was established under this particular title in the year 2007. H.H. Śrīmad Abhinava Vāgeesha Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar is the founding trustee of the Samithi. This publication is the first of many more to come from the Samithi. The Rāmānuja Matha Samrakshana Samithi has previously undertaken several other projects to bring out the Sankirtanas of Tāllapāka Annamāchārya in the form of compact discs; and in highlighting his association with the doctrine of Rāmānuja, with Śrī Âdi Van Satakopa Swāmi, Ahobilam and the Ahobila Matam.

The release of this volume carries another special significance. This fourteenth day of May 2013 is Chittirai Māsam, Âdra Tirunakshatram, and Shukla Paksha Chauthi in the cyclic year of Vijaya, according to the Tamil calendar. This auspicious day marks the 996<sup>th</sup> Tirunakshatram of the king among ascetics, Śrīmad Rāmānuja Âchārya! This auspicious day is also Vaishāka Shukla Paksha according to the Chandramāsa (Lunar) calendar, and marks the celebration of the Tirunakshatram of the illustrious Śrī Periya Parakāla Swāmi ('Dodda Parakāla' Swāmi), the 21<sup>st</sup> Peetādhipathi of Parakāla Śrī Matam.

On this glorious day, this book has been submitted as an offering to the lotus feet of Lord Sri Lakshmi Hayavadana, adorning the sacred sanctum of Parakāla Swāmi Math, Mysore; by our Âchārya Śrīmad Abhinava Vāgeesha Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar. Śrīkāryakartha Śrīmān Mahāmahopādhyāya, Vāgdevivaraputra, Dr. A.S. Venkatanathan has then released this volume for the benefit of devotees.

The present work is the culmination of over two and a half years of commitment to research and study. Even before its publication, it has satisfied a major objective from our perspective. As authors of this work, we have become privileged to acquaint ourselves well with the most revered Guruparampara. It has given us a thorough insight into understanding the glory of our Sampradāyam. And it has sowed the seeds of devotion and admiration towards the glorious lineage of preceptors without whose grace it would have been impossible to acquire the quintessential secrets of most ancient and precious doctrine of Vêdānta.

Ślokas quoted in this work and their translations are primarily for the purpose of indicating the 'Pramānam' (testimony or proof) available with respect to the content of the work. Some of these Ślokas are Maha-mantras (great esoteric verses) and convey quintessential truths when correctly learnt with their meanings, only through appropriate initiation from a qualified teacher. The translations provided herein are by no means a substitute for that.

We would like to mention here that a task such as this is beset with extreme difficulty! When a work involving the praise of an exceedingly glorious lineage of Âchāryas who belong to an immaculate tradition is taken up by two individuals who lack the qualification to do so, errors are bound to creep in. Who are we to

recount the glory of these noble souls when we are incapable of understanding even a fraction of their divinity?

While the depth of the ocean may never be precisely fathomed, even a general onlooker can gather a hint of its abounding grandeur and magnificence. With our limited capacity, we are attempting to describe what is but a small aspect of the profound ocean like nectarine glory of the illustrious Guruparampara!

We have been supported in this journey by proficient members of the editorial board and several other significant contributors who have been compassionate towards us! If not for their extraordinary efforts, the result of our endeavor would have been altogether different! Mistakes that may have still made their way into the manuscript are solely due to our incompetence.

Nevertheless, it is purely by the grace and blessings of our Âchārya that ordinary individuals like us are able to attempt and accomplish a noble task such as this! We surrender at the lotus feet of Śrīmad Abhinava Vāgeesha Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar!

Before we proceed, we pay obeisance to Lord Sowmya Keshava Perumal along with His consort Śrī Sowmya Nāyaki and also to Lord Śrī Lakshmi Varada Yoga Bhoga Narasimha, who all adorn the beautiful village of 'Shantigrama' (named so since it was gifted to Queen Shāntala Devi by her husband Śrī Vishnuvardhana Hoysala Deva). It is by the limitless grace of our ancestors who resided there, that we have been blessed with the priceless treasure called 'Rāmānuja Matha' or 'the doctrine of Rāmānuja'!

Chaitanya Sreenath  
Adviteeya N. Dixit

May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013

## Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the significant contributions of the following individuals without whose help this work would have been impossible.

We are greatly indebted to our Âchārya Śrīmad Abhinava Vāgeesha Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar whose constant guidance and ceaseless enthusiasm in discussions pertaining to the Sampradāyam was the determining factor that helped us accomplish the ordained task.

Many thanks to Mahamahopadhyaya, Vāgdevivaraputra, Dr. A.S. Venkatanathan, Śrīkāryakartha of Parakāla Maṭh, for all the help provided.

We are very grateful to Mahamahopadhyaya, Bharatha Rashtrapati Sammanita, Payyambadi Chetlur Dr. V. Srivathsankacharya Swāmi, for clarifying important concepts and Slokas through Śrī Sudarshan Srinivasan.

We offer our heartfelt thanks to Śrī Bhāshya Simhāsanam Śrī U.Ve. V.S. Karunakarachariar Swāmi for clarifying all questions pertaining to the life of Nadādur Ammāl and for all the support provided.

Śrī Kilneerkundram Velureunni Śrī U.Ve. Vijayaraghavachariar- the disciple of Âsthāna Vidwan of Parakāla Math, Vallipuram Śrī U.Ve. Madhvachariar (who in turn was the disciple of Śrīmad Abhinava Ranganātha Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar) - has been compassionate towards us and has helped us immensely in the translation of difficult Sanskrit verses. We offer humble prostrations to him.

We respectfully offer our thanks to Śrī Sadagopan Iyengar of Coimbatore, who helped edit the text of the Divya Sūri Stuti after extensively studying the Grantha characters of the available palm leaf manuscript. He has also compared and verified this with other sources, and these variations have been indicated by us at appropriate places. Śrī Sadagopan Iyengar also clarified our questions pertaining

to the profound meanings of the terse verses of the Saptati Ratna Mālika. Finally, he has also graciously edited this work by going through the entire manuscript in detail.

Special thanks to our dear friend 'Āgama Praveena' Śrī Shalva Pille Iyengar, Sthāneekam at Melukote, for his ceaseless and unconditional support offered to us in providing assistance with translating some of the most difficult Sanskrit verses quoted in this text. He has also rendered invaluable assistance by providing the Sanskrit text and English transliteration with diacritical marks for all Ślokas quoted in this work.

We would like to acknowledge the extraordinary abilities of Śrī Sudarshan Srinivasan and his tireless efforts due to which we have been able to keep the text of the current work as close to the original of the Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam as possible! He has, very patiently, clarified several quintessential doctrinal tenets by consulting authoritative commentaries of previous Āchāryas, which helped us greatly. Having gone through the entire work repeatedly, he has lent invaluable assistance in the completion of this work.

We are extremely grateful to Smt. Jayasree Santhanam of Bangalore, who spent numerous hours off her busy schedule to read to us from the Tamil script of the Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam. Her skills with the language of Tamil and her patience in reading through the voluminous text made it possible for us to clarify many aspects of the life of Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar.

Śrīmān C.G. Balaji has been kind enough to offer his guidance with regard to many aspects of the Parakāla Swāmi Matam Sampradāya. It was his detailed write up about Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar that inspired us to include 'a separate section entitled 'Glory of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar!' in this book. His words served as the nucleus and guide for enumerating the various glorious pastimes of the Jīyar.

Śrīmān Achutharaman has been kind enough to go through the entire work in detail and lend his invaluable comments and suggestions in further improving the accuracy of details presented in this book. He has been our guiding light. We would like to thank him for this great help. Śrī Achutharaman has been the major driving force behind initiating a teamwork approach towards restoration of activities that bring out the glory of the Parakāla Swāmi Matam!

We would like to place on record a special note of thanks to Śrīmān Achutharaman, Śrīmān C.G. Balaji, Śrīmān C. G. Sampath Kumar, and Śrīmān Sudarshan Srinivasan for embellishing this book with an excellent, succinct, and informative foreword.

We also take this opportunity to thank the following individuals who have contributed towards the successful completion of this work:

- 1) Śrī Krishnamurthy Bindiganavile Srinivasan (Nandakumar) of Parakāla Swāmi Matam for sharing a few rare photographs of the Matam.
- 2) Śrī Pasquale Manzo; Curator, Sanskrit Language Collections at the British Library; for helping us trace the old publication of Divya Sūri Stuti in Grantha Script and also for all the assistance provided in accessing precious old publications from the British Library collections at London, UK.
- 3) Dr. T.S. Ravishankar, Director, Sanskrit and Dravidian Epigraphy; Epigraphical Studies, Archaeological Survey of India; for his kind help with recovering the original tracing of the ancient Perumāl Koil Inscription of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, which is preserved safely in the archives of the ASI.
- 4) Śrī C. G. Sampath Kumar of Bangalore for sharing with us the photographs of the Parakāla Swāmi Matam archives.

- 5) Smt. Kripa K. Achar, Śrī Ramachandra Achar and Kum. Roshini R. Achar for helping us procure the images of the palm leaf manuscripts of the Divya Sūri Stotra from Adyar Library, Chennai.
- 6) Śrī T. Raguveeradayal, Thiruppullani, for his timely help.
- 7) Śrī B. V. Ramapriya, Melukote, for all the help provided.
- 8) Śrī Narasimhan Rajagopalan for his kind help.
- 9) Śrī Veeraraghavan Iyengar, Dallas, Texas; for graciously helping with the Tamil texts on Deśika Dinacharya.
- 10) Śrī Śriram Raghunath for his kind assistance.
- 11) Śrī Krishnan S. Iyengar, Coimbatore, for lending his assistance.
- 12) Śrī Govindan, Kanchipuram, for all the help provided.
- 13) Śrī Satish Kumar Nandakumar, for all the help rendered.
- 14) Śrī Arvind Sudhaker Shenoy, Bangalore; for kindly helping with capturing a few important photographs that have further helped enhance the message of this book and Smt. Soujanya Sreenath; for the priceless help and all the hard work put into editing the photographs and color plates presented in this book.
- 15) Śrī Apratim N. Dixit for his invaluable help with creating Guruparampara flow charts.
- 16) Smt. Sarasa Sampath Kumar for her blessings and all the help provided in editing the work.
- 17) Śrī Oppiliappan Koil Varadachari Sadagopan; for all the help offered in this project.
- 18) Śrī Belakavadi Ramapriyan, for his unconditional help offered in supporting this endeavor.
- 19) Śrī R. Ravishankar, Graphic Designer and Śrī L. Shivalingaiah, Chief Supervisor of Navbharath Press, Seshadripuram, Bangalore; for helping us in designing and formatting this book.

- 20) Śrī Sridhar and Sri Shreyas, proprietors of Navbharath Press, Seshadripuram, Bangalore; for helping us publish this book in a timely fashion.
- 21) We would like to acknowledge here, the unconditional support offered to us by our dear parents- Smt. Godha Sreenath; Smt. Leela Narasimhan and Śrī. G. R. Narasimhan, in ensuring successful completion of this task.

We would also like to acknowledge the contributions of the following libraries which have either directly or indirectly helped us in this important endeavor. They have also been instrumental in preserving and making available some rare and precious works.

- 1) The Digital Library of India, accessed at portal <http://www.dli.ernet.in>; hosted by the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore
- 2) The Adyar Library and Research Center at the Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai, India
- 3) The British Library, London, UK
- 4) The New York Public Library, New York, NY, U.S.A
- 5) Library of the Anantāchārya Indological Research Institute, Mumbai, India
- 6) Web portal- [www.sadagopan.org](http://www.sadagopan.org), and its associated sites, hosted by Śrī Oppiliappan Koil Varadachari Sadagopan; which houses a host of ebooks pertaining to the works of poorvācharyās.
- 7) Web portal- [www.prapatti.com](http://www.prapatti.com); online resource for various stotras; website maintained by Śrī Sunder Kidāmbi and Śrī A.S. Rajagopalan, U.S.A.
- 8) Deekshith Alasingarachar Library of the Rāmānuja Matha Samrakshana Samithi; Bangalore, India
- 9) The Parakāla Matham Granthālayam, Mysore, India

## A Glossary of traditional terms

**Âchārya:** a spiritual guide or preceptor.

**Âḷvār:** literally- 'one who is immersed'; the twelve Âḷvārs were called so because they were incessantly immersed in deep contemplation upon the Lord and His innumerable qualities.

**Aḷhaghiya Manavālanī (T):** the processional deity of Lord Ranganātha at Śrīrangam.

**Alamelumanga Nāchīyār (T):** the consort of Lord Vēṅkatēśhwara, who resides in the sacred city of Tirupathi.

**Amudu (T):** or 'Amudam' means nectar or ambrosia; food that has been offered to the Lord becomes nectarine, and is therefore worthy of being partaken by the devotee. For example, 'Kari' or cooked vegetable when partaken after offering to the Lord becomes 'Kari Amudu'.

**Anga Panchaka Atma Raksha Bhāra Samarpanam:** Refers to the complete surrender of the burden (Bhāra Samarpanam) of deliverance of one's own self (Atma Raksha) at the feet of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa. This act of Prapatti or Sharanāgati is performed with its fivefold limbs 'Anga Panchaka'- 1) Anukulya Sankalpa- a vow to perform only those deeds sanctioned by the scriptures, thereby pleasing the Lord; 2) Prathikūlya Varjanam- avoidance of deeds that are not sanctioned by the scriptures and are not pleasing to the Lord; 3) Kārpanyam- a state of complete subservience to the Lord, being aware that one cannot attain deliverance merely by one's own efforts; 4) Maha Vishvaasam- total unshakable faith in the Lord and; 5) Gopthrutva Varanam- a prayer unto the Supreme Savior seeking His protection.

**Archā Vighraha:** a deity consecrated at a temple or home.

Arayar (T): an honorific title given to the traditional poets reciting the composition of the Âḷvārs in front of the deity in the sanctum.

Arulappādu Samarpanam (T): It is the formal offering of the Tirtha and Shatāri with benedictions proclaimed by the Lord Himself through the agency of the priest at Śree Vaishnava temples and Matams. Arulappādu is offering of the Tirtha in the form of a blessing to a deserving individual, thereby honoring him.

Archaka: the priest.

Attigiri Perumāl (T): one of the appellations of Lord Varadarāja Perumāl at Kānchipuram.

Avatāra Rahasya: The esoteric aspect of an incarnation.

Avatāra Vishêsha: The distinguishing feature of an incarnation.

Bhagavad Vishayam: As directed by Âchārya Rāmānuja, Tiru Kurugai Pirān Pillān composed a gloss on the Tiruvaimoḷi of Nammāḷvār. Rāmānuja called this Vyākhyānam or commentary as 'Bhagavad Vishayam'. This gloss contains 6000 Padi's; wherein each padi is composed of 32 syllables. Therefore the work is also known as Tiruārāyirappadi (Sacred Six Thousand Padi).

Brahmamedha Kainkaryam: also called Brahmamedha Samskāram, it is a special religious rite performed after a realized soul has shed the mortal body. These rites are different from the ones performed for ordinary householders, since the pursuit of a realized soul involves the attainment of the Supreme Brahman. If the departed soul was a Yativarya, i.e. an ascetic, cremation is not done.

Brahmatantra Swatantra- Brahmatantra means the Vêda, Vêdānta and supporting texts such as Itihāsa, Purānās; Swatantra means- one who is adept in, or one who has acquired mastery. The word 'Tantra' stands for doctrine. The word 'Brahma' stands for the doctrine revealed by the Supreme Brahman Himself.

**Charama Śloka:** one among the three quintessential mantras that are received from an Āchārya during initiation into Panchasamskāra; it is the 66<sup>th</sup> verse of the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Bhagavad Gita

**Deity / Deities:** In general the term 'Deity' is used to describe a divine being of the rank of a God or Goddess. In this book however, the term 'Deity' is used to describe the Archā Vighraha or an idol. While an 'idol' is the representation of a God or a revered preceptor that is made by sculpting, modeling or casting, the term 'Deity' has been used in this book to indicate the fact that the God or preceptor represented by an idol verily comes to reside in it for the purpose of receiving the devotee's worship! This is what is called as Archāvatāra- an incarnation in the form of an image. While 'idol' denotes merely the cast image, 'deity' signifies that the object of worship verily resides within the image. For a devotee therefore, the 'deity' is non-different from the very God or preceptor it represents!

**Deśika Sampradāyam:** Refers to the doctrine of Rāmānuja as expounded by Śrī Vēdānta Deśika. It is important to note that the teachings of Vēdānta Deśika are verily the same teachings that were propounded earlier by Rāmānuja. The Deśika Sampradāyam is non-different from the doctrine of Rāmānuja- i.e. Rāmānuja Siddhānta, Emperumānār Darshana or Ubhaya Vēdānta Siddhānta. Yet, it is called as Deśika Sampradāyam only in order to express gratitude to Swāmi Vēdānta Deśika who re-established and strengthened the same tenets at a later time.

**Devarāja Perumāḷ (T):** One of the appellations of Lord Varadarāja Perumāḷ at Kānchipuram.

**Dhanur Māsam (T):** The month of Mārghaḷi, begins with the entry of the Sun into the ninth zodiac of 'Dhanu' or Sagittarius; December – January according to the Gregorian calendar.

**Divya Mangala Vighraha:** a deity consecrated at a temple or home. The divine magnificent body of the Lord in His supreme abode of Vaikuntam is also called so.

**Divya Prabandhās (T):** also called Nālāyira Divya Prabandham, comprises the 4000 Tamil verses of the composition of all Āḷvārs put together; see appendix.

**Dramida Vêda (T):** another term for the 4000 Tamil verses of the composition of all Âḷvârs put together. Tamil is called Dramida Bāsha. Since the Tamil expositions of the Âḷvârs are verily a gist of the teachings of the Vêda, the Divya Prabandhās are called Dramida Vêda.

**Grantha:** in this book primarily used to describe a work composed by an Âchārya. In Sanskrit it also means a full Śloka comprising of 32 syllables (E.g. the 'Anushtup' meter, where each quarter of the verse comprises 8 syllables). Grantha lipi refers to the ancient script that was used to write texts onto palm leaf manuscripts.

**Granthālaya:** a library.

**Guruparampara:** the traditional succession of Gurus or Âchāryas of the Śree Vaishnava Siddhānta.

**Jīyar:** a Sannyāsi who has accepted the order of an ascetic; and may also be the appointed head of a Śree Vaishnava Matam.

**Kacchi Vaitthān Mantapam (T):** A Mandapa (Sanskrit) is a pavilion. Here it refers to the divine Mandapa in the Kānchipuram Varadarāja Perumāl temple. This Mandapa is located just outside and behind the sanctum of Lord Varadarāja. See color plates.

**Kainkaryam (T):** performance of servitude.

**Kālakshepam (T):** lit- spending time, i.e. by engaging in the study and teaching of the scriptures; also refers to the sacred deliverance of oral instruction on the doctrinal tenets to deserving disciples.

**Koil (T):** Śrīrangam, temple of Lord Ranganātha at Śrīrangam.

**Madaippalli (T):** the kitchen.

**Mahavākya:** refers to the 'great sayings' of the Upanishads.

**Manipravaḷa:** is the admixture of Sanskrit and Tamil in the creation of a unique literary style; employed by the followers of the Ubhaya Vêdānta. This literary style was written using the Grantha Script. 'Mani-pravaḷa' literally means 'Pearls' of Sanskrit with 'Corals' of Tamil!

**Mantra Rahasyas:** The quintessential secrets of the three Mantras- Tirumantra, Dvayam and Charama Śloka.

**Mantras:** The three Mantras- Tirumantra, Dvayam and Charama Śloka.

**Matam (T):** used in this book synonymously with the Sanskrit word Maṭh, which indicates the place where a Guru resides along with disciples; here it is used to also indicate an institution headed by a Śree Vaishnava Sannyāsin.

**Matham:** used in this book to primarily indicate a doctrine as expounded by an Âchārya; especially Âchārya Rāmānuja.

**Moolavar (T):** refers to the main deity consecrated within the sanctum of a temple.

**Nālāyira Divya Prabandham (T):** the 4000 Tamil verses of the composition of all Âḷvārs put together. See Appendix.

**Nāchiyār (T):** the consort, of Lord Nārāyana.

**Padi (T):** a unit composed of 32 syllables in Tamil. It actually corresponds to the word 'Grantha' in Sanskrit which refers to a full Śloka of 32 syllables composed in Anushtup Meter. The word 'Padi' is often used to describe the total content of verses in a given Tamil work. 'Padi' also means 'steps'.

**Panchasamskāra:** Also called Samāshrayana. It is the initiation of a Śree Vaishnava performed by an Âchārya. It constitutes five 'Samskāras' or 'Purificatory rites' or 'Sacraments'- Tāpa- the application of the heated insignia of conch and discus on the shoulders; Pundra- the application of the twelve Urdhva Pundaras or Tiruman Śrichoornams at the appropriate portions on the body; Nāma- receiving the appellation of Dāsyā Nāma; Mantra- the initiation into the quintessential Mantras by an Âchārya; and Ijya- the performance of Bhagavad Tiruvārādanam (appropriate worship of Śrīman Nārāyana) according to the prescribed manner.

**Parivrājaka:** a Sannyāsin; also called Yativarya, or Jīyar.

**Pattolai (T):** a document or epistle recorded onto pages composed of dried palm leaves.

Periya Perumāl (T): An appellation for the Moolavar Lord Ranganātha at Śrīrangam.

Perumāl (T): The Lord Śrīman Nārāyana.

Perumāl Koil (T): A unique term for the temple of Devarāja Perumāl or Varadarāja Perumāl at Kāñchipuram.

Perundevi Tāyār (T): the unique appellation for the Archā Vighraha of Goddess Śree at Perumāl Koil; i.e. the consort of Lord Varadarāja

Pirātti: the Consort; of the Lord

Prāchārya: the Āchārya of an Āchārya; a principal preceptor

Prasādam: lit- what has been bestowed; in this book primarily refers to the food that has been offered to the deity

Prathistapanāchārya: Prathista means to establish. An Āchārya who re-establishes the same doctrine of Vēdānta as taught by Śrīman Nārāyana, i.e. the Vēda Marga is called Prathistapanāchārya

Pravachanam (T): refers to the sacred deliverance of oral instruction on the doctrinal tenets to deserving disciples.

Presha Mantra: The Mantra that is required for the initiation into Sannyāsa or ascetism.

Pushkarini: refers to the sacred tank or reservoir that exists as a part of the Temple complex; the main temple tank in Tirumala is called Swāmi Pushkarini, while the one in Perumāl Koil is called Anantasaras, e.t.c.

Rāmānuja Darshanam: refers to the doctrine of Rāmānuja as propounded by him. It is important to note that Rāmānuja was not the progenitor of this doctrine. In fact, this is the same doctrine of Vēdānta which was taught initially by Lord Śrīman Nārāyana; further reiterated by great sages such as Manu, Vālmiki, Vashista, Parāshara, Vyāsa, Shuka and others; then expounded by the works of ancient sages such as Bhodāyana, Dramida, Tanka, Guhadeva, and others; again elucidated in the composition of the Âḷvārs; and finally systematized by Rāmānuja on the basis of the teachings of Yāmunāchārya and Nāthamuni. Rāmānuja, in reconstituting this doctrine, pointed out the fallacies in the other systems that

misrepresented the teachings of the Vêda and thereby construed the Vêda and Vêdânta in its true sense. Therefore the doctrine of Vêdânta became called as Rāmānuja Siddhānta.

Rāmānuja Siddhāntam: As above.

Ranganāyaki Tāyār (T): refers to the consort Śridevi, of Lord Ranganātha at Śrirangam.

Ranganātha: Lord Ranga at Śrirangam.

Sambhāvana (T): offering respect, regard or reverence.

Sampradāya: means a doctrine handed down through tradition; a valid tradition that is carried on in an unbroken manner.

Sampradāya Pravachanam (T): refers to the sacred deliverance of oral instruction on the doctrinal tenets of Rāmānuja Siddhāntam to deserving disciples

Samsāra: refers to the endless circuit of mundane existence, undergoing repeated transmigration in the mortal world.

Sannidhi (T): Sanctum, the residence of the deity in a temple or home.

Sannyāsa: the fourth order of life, or asceticism.

Sat-Sampradāya: an unbroken tradition that carries forth the correct teaching; i.e the tenets of Vêdânta.

Siddhānta: doctrine or philosophy.

Siddhānta Pravachanam: refers to the sacred deliverance of oral instruction on the doctrinal tenets of Rāmānuja Siddhāntam to deserving disciples.

Siddhānta Pravartaka: Pravartaka is one who carries forward. Siddhānta Pravartaka, in the context of this book, refers to one who carries forward the doctrine of Rāmānuja.

Simhāsanādhipati: lit- one who ascends the throne; Rāmānuja appointed 74 Simhāsanādipathis to carry forward the doctrine of Vêdânta as systematized by him. Of these 74 Simhāsanādipathis; four scholars who were extremely well versed with the Śri Bhāshya

became the Śrī Bhāshya Simhāsanādipathis; among these four scholars, Pillān was highly proficient with the Śrī Bhāshya and also with the Bhagavad Vishayam- therefore he was called Śrī Bhāshya Bhagavad Vishaya Ubhaya (dual) Simhāsanādipathi!

Śrīe Vaishnava: refers to the followers of Rāmānuja Siddhānta who are initiated with the panchasamskāra. Note that there were Śrīe Vaishnavās even prior to the birth of Rāmānuja, for the doctrine elucidated by him was not new.

Śrī Bhāshya: the detailed and immaculate gloss composed by Rāmānuja on the Vēdānta Sūtras was called as 'Śrī Bhāshya' by Goddess Saraswathi at Sharada Peetam in Kashmir.

Śrī Bhāshyakāra: Rāmānuja was given the appellation 'Śrī Bhāshyakāra' by Goddess Saraswathi at Sharada Peetam in Kashmir, for his lucid rendition of an immaculate gloss on the Brahma Sūtras of Vyāsa.

Śrīkārya Dhurandhara: Dhurandhara means 'chief'; Sri Kāryam in general means one who renders Kainkariyam or service; Śrīkārya Dhurandhara is the post of 'Chief Manager of temple affairs' in service of the Lord.

Śrīpāda Tīrtham: Water sanctified by the divine feet of an Āchārya.

Sthāpanāchārya: Sthāpana means to establish. An Āchārya who re-establishes the same doctrine of Vēdānta as taught by Śrīman Nārāyaṇa, is called Vēda Marga Sthapanāchārya.

Tāyār (T): literally means 'mother', but specifically refer to Goddess Śrīe, the consort of Lord Vishnu; She is the compassionate mother of the entire universe and is therefore called so.

Tadeeyārādhana: the service of Tadeeyas; Tadeeyas are those who have resigned to the Lord, i.e. the Śrīe Vaishnavās who have performed Sharanāgati/Prapatti.

Taniyan (T): means a laudatory verse in praise of an Āchārya; literally means 'by itself', the verse generally stands as an independent piece of eulogy and is therefore called so.

Tiravukol Mudrai (T): Keys, lit- the one that opens.

Tirtha (T): the sacred water that is offered after the performance of Tiruvārāadhanam.

Tiru Arangam (T): Śrirangam.

Tiru Adhyayana Utsavam (T): refers to the 'sacred festival of recitation' celebrated in Śree Vaishnava Temples with the recitation of the Vêdas and Divya Prabandhās. This festival is celebrated during the month of Mārghaḷi or the Dhanur Masam.

Tiru Avatāram (T): the divine birth, generally refers to descent of the Lord or Divya Sūris onto the earth.

Tirukkāveri (T): the sacred river Kāveri.

Tirumāligai (T): means sacred residence or house.

Tirumanjanam (T): the divine ablutions offered to the Lord and His consort.

Tirunakshatram (T): the birth star (and month) indicating the time of divine descent of the Divya Sūris onto the earth.

Tirunāl (T): sacred day.

TiruNārāyana: an appellation unique to the Moola Vighraha of Lord Nārāyana at Melukote.

Tirunārāyanapuram: the city of Melukote.

Tiru Olakkam (T): the meeting place (of devotees) in a temple, or assembly (of devotees) at a festival.

Tiruvadi (T): resorting to the sacred feet, one who serves the feet of an Âchārya is said to have Âchārya's Tiruvadi Sambandham.

Tiruvārāadhanam: also called Samārādhana; lit. Sacred worship, refers to the correct and prescribed means of worshipping an Archā Vighraha of Śrīman Nārāyana and Saligrama Śilas.

Tiruvēkatamudayān (T): an appellation unique to the Moola Vighraha of Lord Vēṅkatēshwara at Tirumala.

Thiruvilachinnai (T): The imprints of the 'Shaṅka-Chakra' or 'Conch-Discus' of Śrīman Nārāyana. When it is performed as a part of the Panchasamskāra, the imprints are marked with help of heated

insignia. Application of the heat is important as it constitutes one of the five Samskārās. When the Thiruvilachinnai is offered to infants, the same is done as ‘Raksha’ or ‘protection’ with the help of sandal paste, or by tying a string with small emblems of the Conch and Discus around the wrist of the child.

Tiruvaimoḷi: a work of Nammālvār that carries the essence of the Vēdas.

Ubhaya: means dual.

Ubhaya Vēdānta means the dual Vēdānta- referring to:

- 1) The Vēdānta texts along with the Brahma Sutras of Vyāsa, its detailed gloss ‘Śrī Bhāṣhya’ composed by Rāmānuja, and the Bhagavad Gita along with the Gita Bhāṣhya composed by Rāmānuja
- 2) The entire Nālāyira Divya Prabandham, with its crown jewel Tiruvaimoḷi of Nammālvār and its gloss ‘Bhagavad Vishayam’ composed by Tirukurugai Pirān Pillān (under the direct guidance of Rāmānuja)

Utsava deity: the processional deity in Śrī Vaishnava temples.

Vainatheya Mantra: the sacred Mantra worshipping Garuda.

Vāda: means a debate; Vādam means an argument backed by sound scriptural proof.

Vyākhyānam: means gloss or exposition.

Yādavādri hill: refers to the sacred hill at Melukote where Lord TiruNārāyana resides.

Yadugiri Nāchiyār (T): the consort of Lord TiruNārāyana at Melukote.

Yati/ Yativarya: a Sannyāsīn who has renounced.

(T)- Tamil



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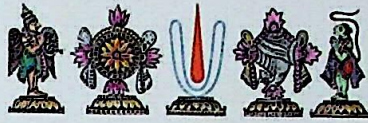
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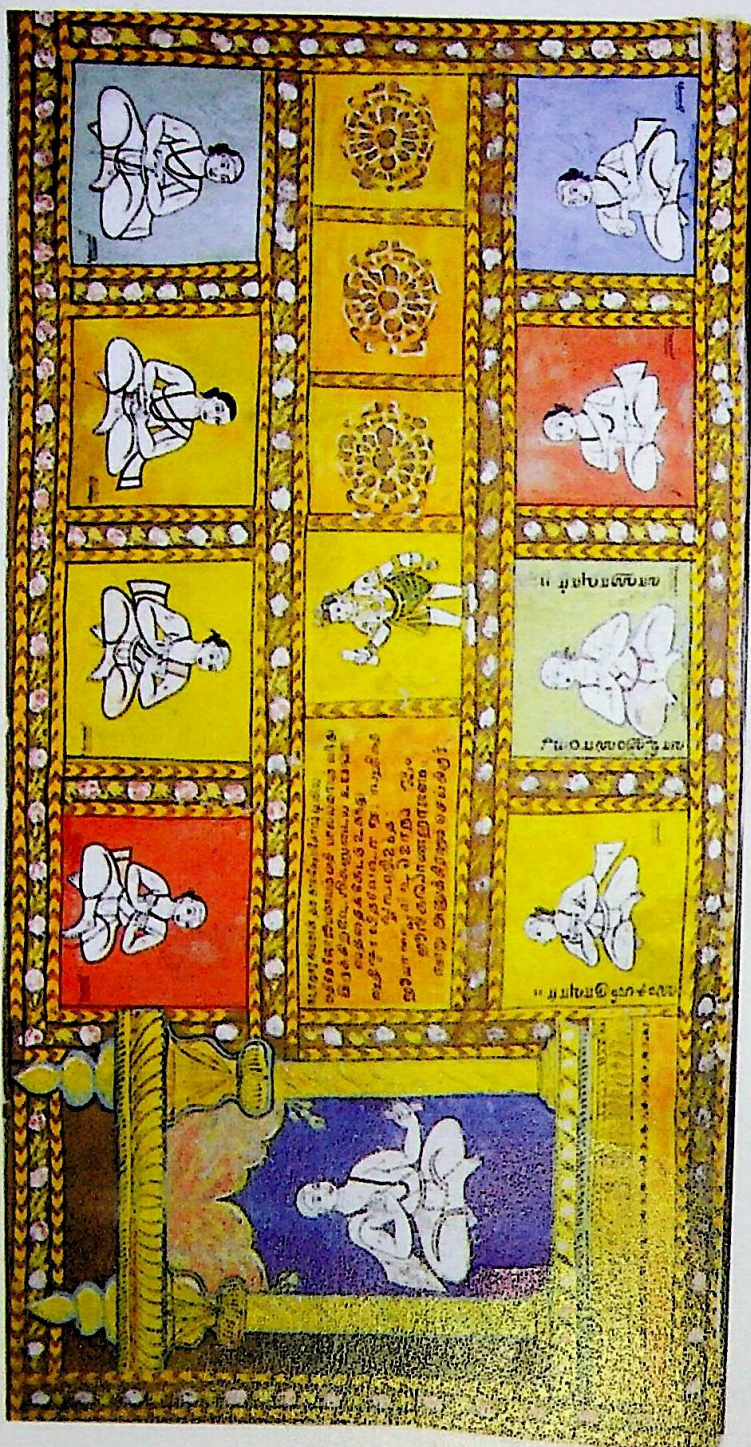
Śri Lakshmi Hayavadana



Varadarāja Perumāl along with Perundevī Tāyār



**Kacchi Vaitthān Mantapam, Perumāl Koil**



Painting seen on the temple ceiling at Perumāl Koil in front of the Kacchi Vaitthān Mantapam

Āchārya Nāḍādur Ammāl (seated within the Mantapam) blessing the child Vēnkatanātha. Also seen in the painting, to the right of Nāḍādur Ammāl, are Śrī Sudarshana Sūri (the author of Sruta Prakāśhika) and Kidāmbi Appullār or Ātreya Rāmānuja



**Archā Vighraha of Lakshmi Hayagreeva**



**Archā Vighraha of Venugopāla Swāmy**

**This Archā Vighraha has been handed down through vamsha parampara of (1st pattam) Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swamy, worshipped by him, and then again handed down through the lineage of Parakāla Matam till date.**



**Archā Vighra of Nammālvār adorning the sacred pedestal of  
Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swamy Matam**



**Archā Vighraha of Âchārya Rāmānuja adorning the sacred pedestal of  
Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swamy Matam**



**Archā Vighraha of Tirukurugai Pirān Pillān adorning the sacred pedestal of Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swamy Matam**



**Archā Vighraha of Śrī Vēdānta Deśika adorning the sacred pedestal of  
Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swamy Matam**



**Archā Vighraha of Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar adorning the sacred pedestal of Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swamy Matam**



**Archā Vighraha of Śrī Vêdānta Deśika adorning the sacred pedestal of  
Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swamy Matam at Kanchipuram**



**Archā Vighraha of Śrī Nainār Āchārya adorning the sacred pedestal  
of Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swamy Matam  
at Kanchipuram**



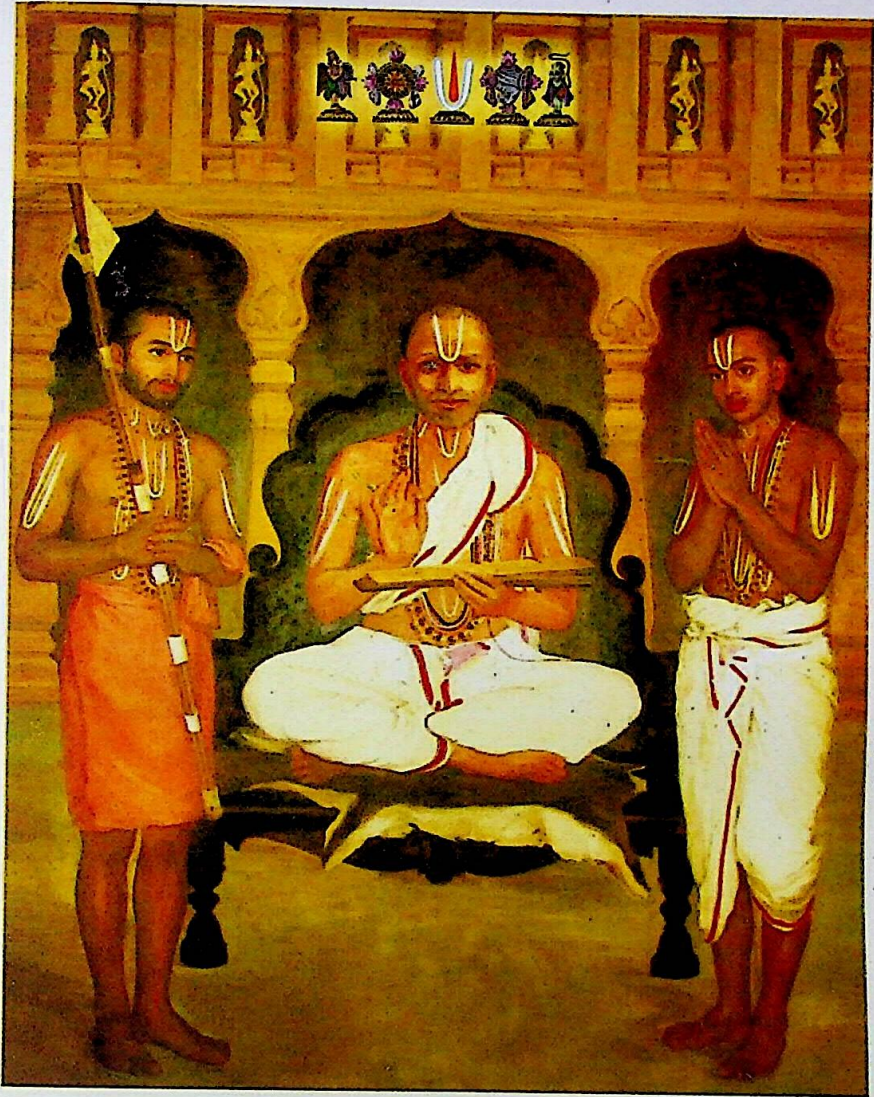
**Archā Vighraha of Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jiyar adorning the sacred pedestal of Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swamy Matam at Kanchipuram**



Śrī Vēdānta Deśika, Śrī Nainār Āchārya and Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar



**Śrī Vēdānta Deśika and Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar**

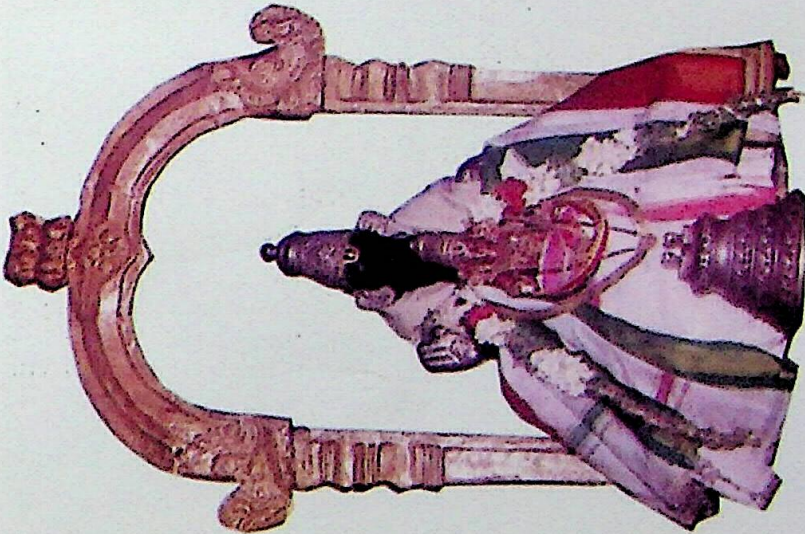


**Painting showing Śrī Vēdānta Deśika with Śrī Nainār Āchārya (to his left) and Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar (to his right)**

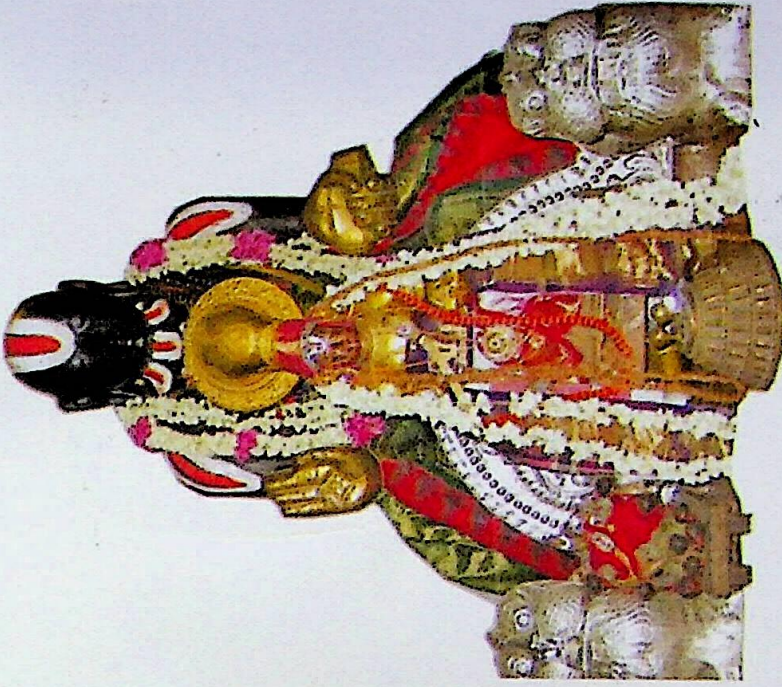


Painting showing Śrī Vêdânta Deśika with his twelve chief disciples, who are considered Siddhânta Pravartakās of Deśika Sampradāyam

Vêdânta Deśika had twelve chief disciples. Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, Vennai Kūtha Jīyar and Prabhakara Jīyar were three Yativarya disciples. Grihastha disciples were son Varadāchārya, Kunjapur Rāmānujāchārya, Kandātai Embār, Tirumalai Śrinivasāchārya, Tirumalai Nallan, Teertha Pillai, Kidāmbi Pillai, Komandur Pillai and Toopil Appai.



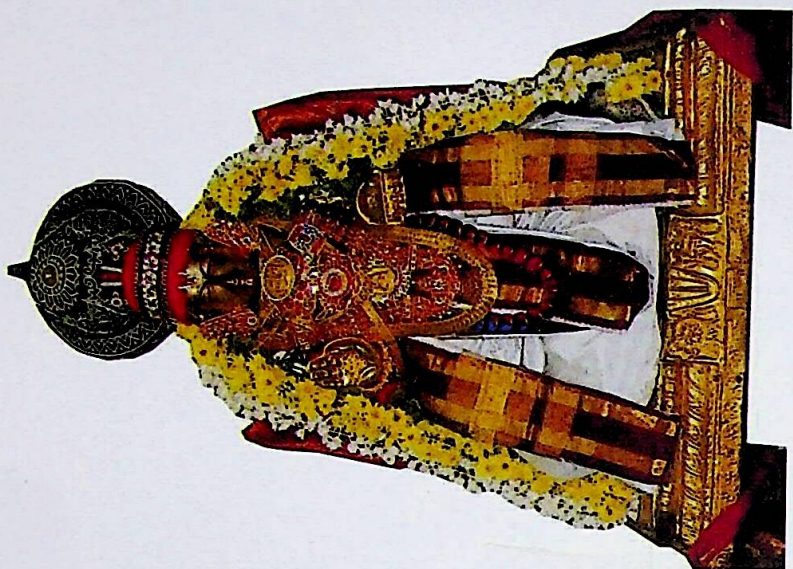
Śrī Vêdānta Desīka, Srirangam



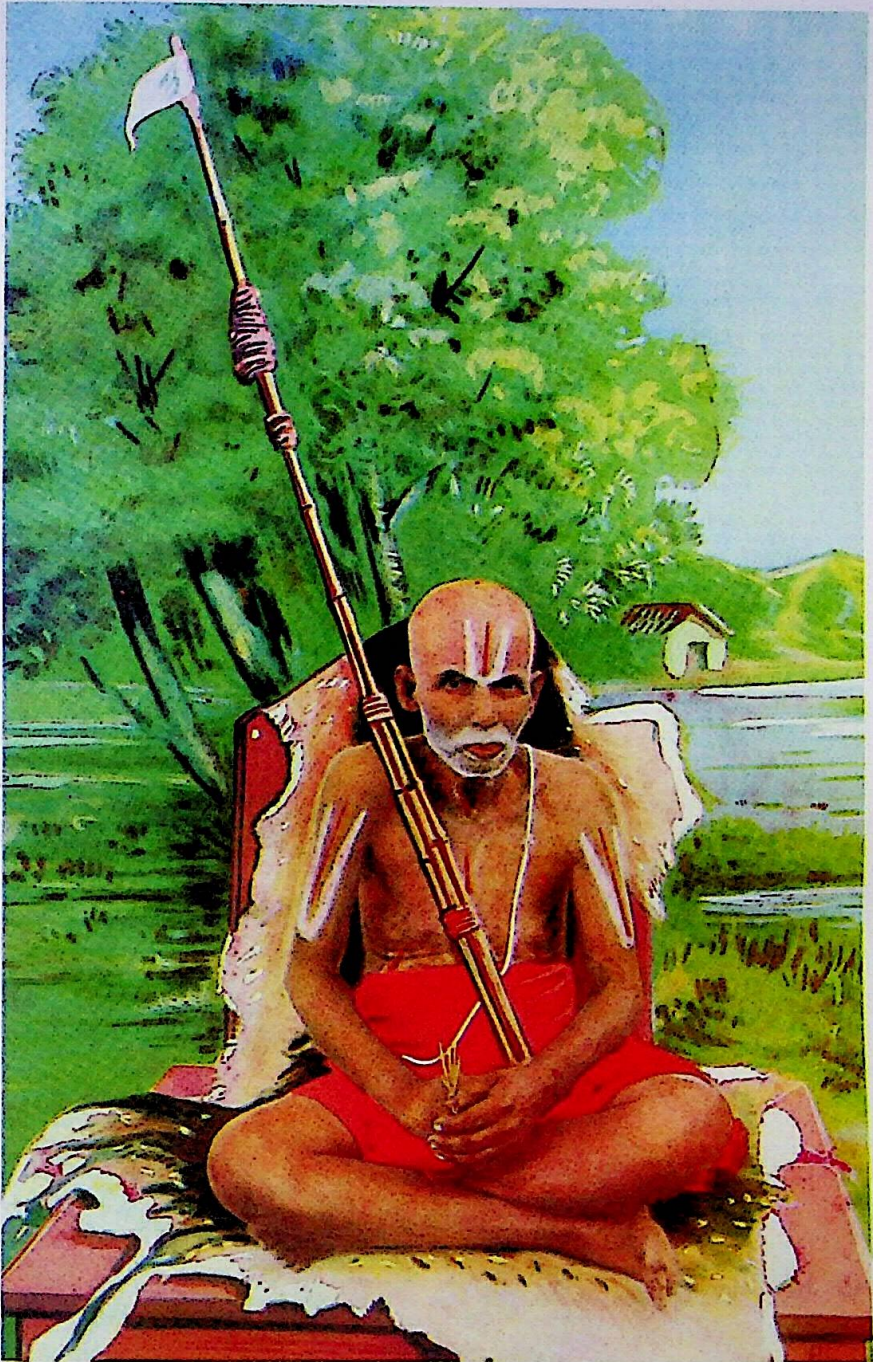
Śrī Vêdānta Desīka, Kanchipuram



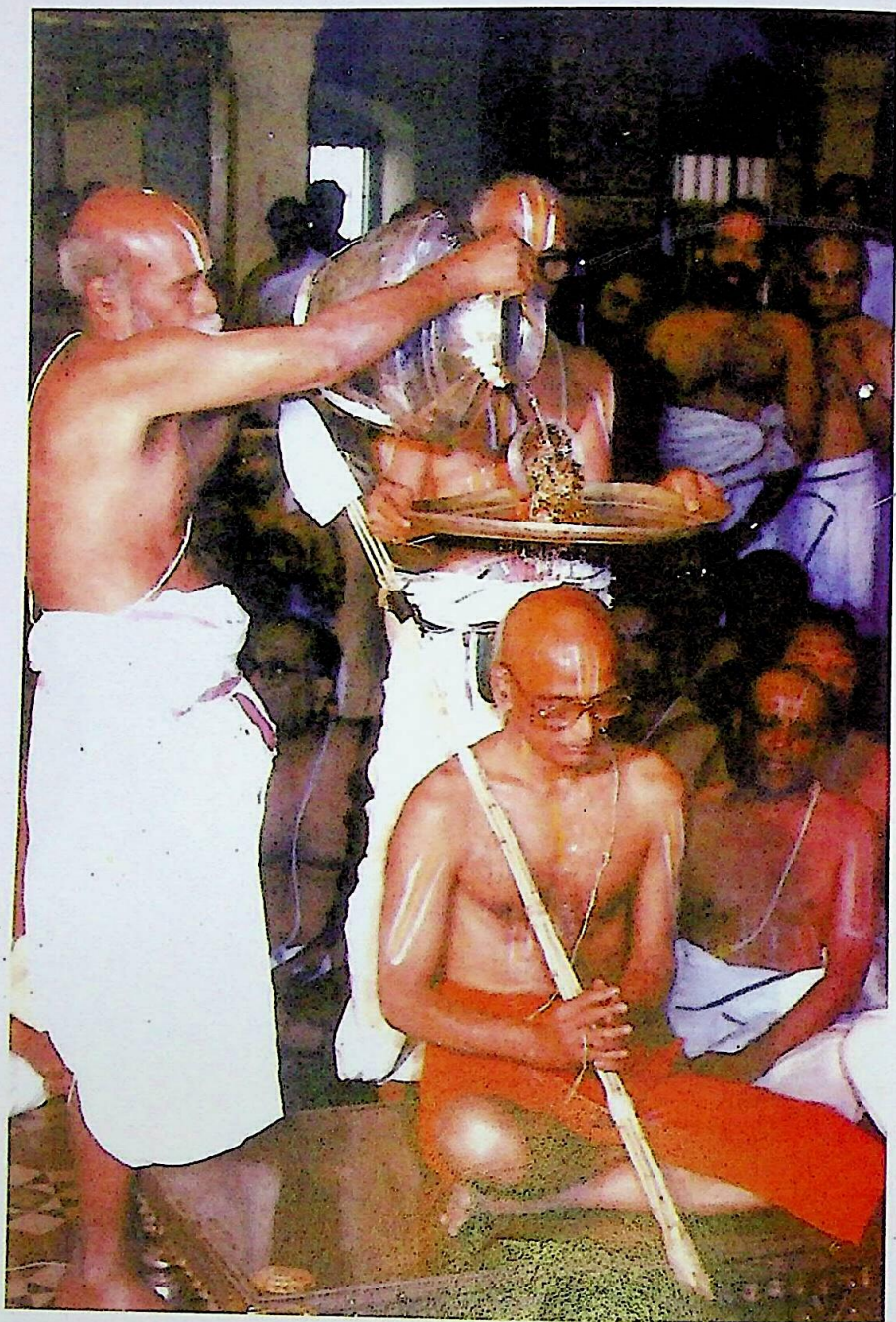
Śrī Vēdānta Deśika, Satyakaalam



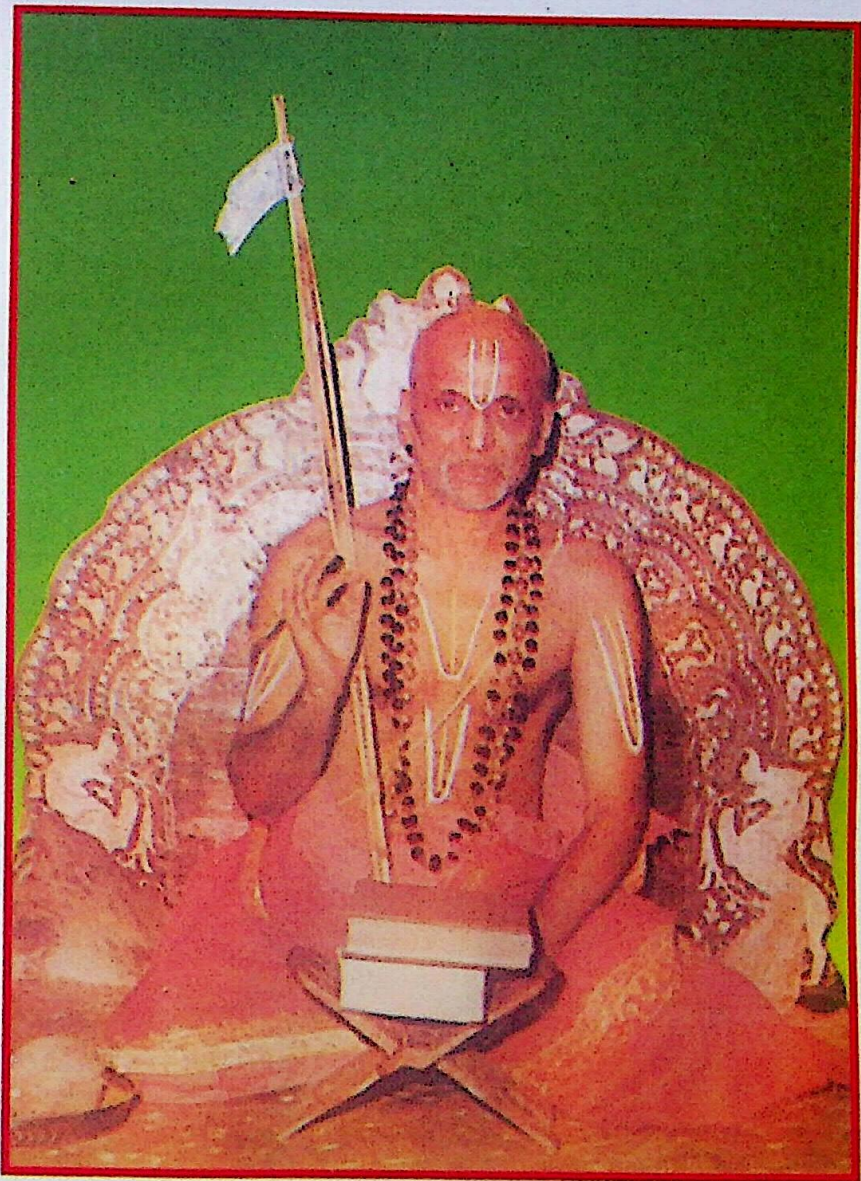
Śrī Vēdānta Deśika, Thooppul



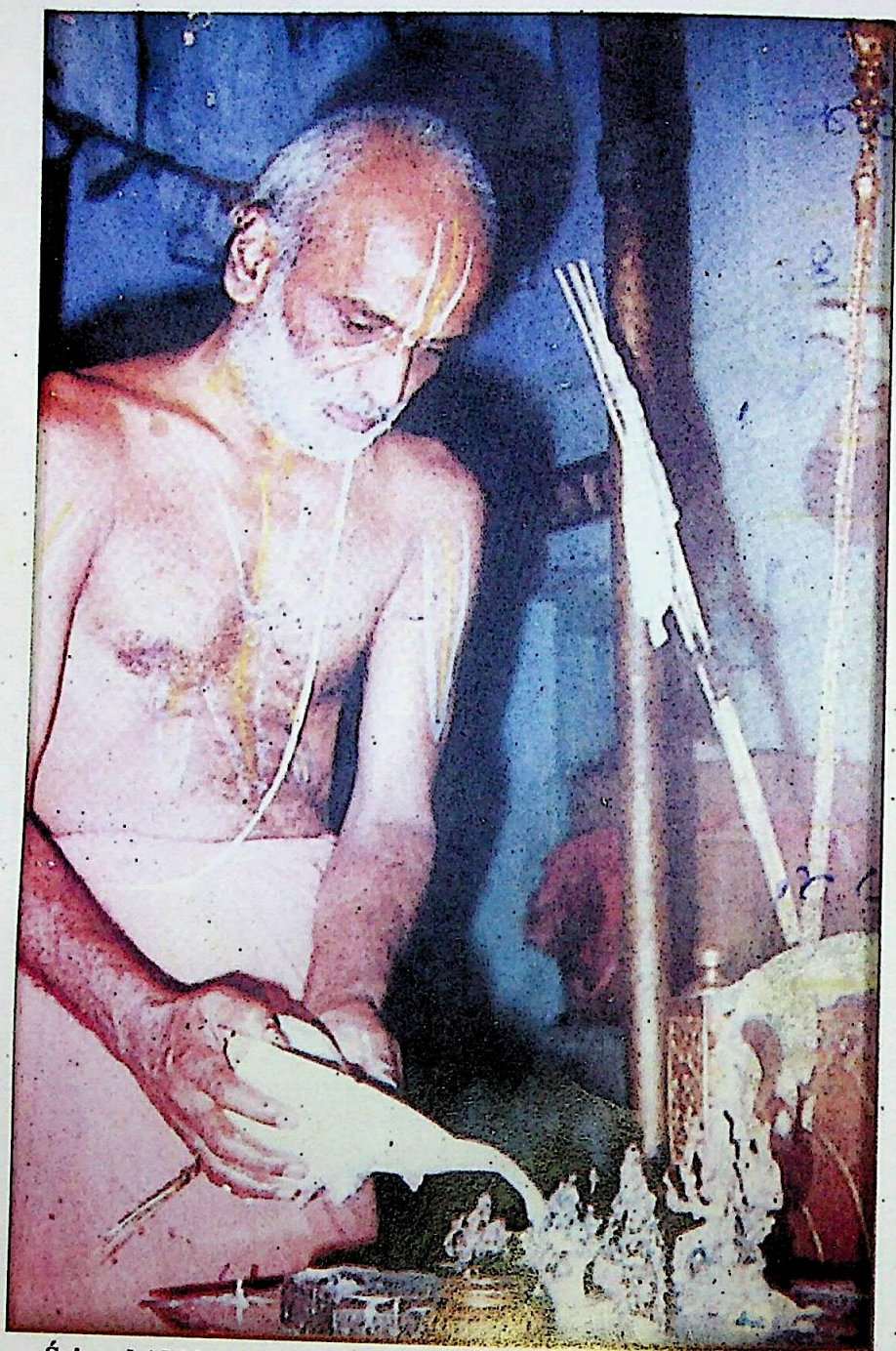
**Śrīmad Abhinava Ranganātha Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Deśikan**



Âshrama Sweekāram  
Śrīmad Abhinava Vāgeesha Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Deśikan



**Śrīmad Abhinava Vāgeśha Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Deśikan**



**Śrīmad Abhinava Vāgeśha Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Deśikan performing the Samārādhana of Lord Lakshmi Hayagreeva**

आचार्यस्य प्रसादेन मम सर्वमभीप्सितम् ।  
प्राप्नुयामिति विश्वासो यस्यास्ति स सुखी भवेत् ॥  
ācāryasya prasādēna mama sarvamabhīpsitam.  
prāpnuyāmiti viśvāsō yasyāsti sa sukhī bhavēt ..

*“One who sincerely believes that the attainment of  
all desires and every other thing that has also been  
obtained are purely through the grace of one’s  
Āchārya, such a person alone remains happy forever!”*



## आचार्य ध्यानम् *Meditation on our Āchārya*

श्रीमन्नूतनरंगनाथयतिराट् आप्तात्मविद्यालयं  
श्रीमन्नूतनलक्ष्मणार्ययतिराट् संप्राप्ततुर्याश्रमं ।  
श्रीवासेन्द्रकटाक्षसंततसुधालक्ष्यात्मयोगाञ्चितं  
श्रीमन्नूतनवागधीशयमिनं भक्त्या श्रयामो गुरुम् ॥

śrīmannūtaṇa raṅganātha yatirāṭ āptātma vidyālayaṃ  
śrīmannūtaṇa lakṣmaṇārya yatirāṭ samprāpta turyāśramaṃ .  
śrīvāsēndra kaṭākṣasantatasudhālakṣyātma yōgāñcitaṃ  
śrīmannūtanavāgadhiśayaminam bhaktyā śrayāmō gurum ..

*“We surrender with utmost devotion to our Āchārya  
Śrīmad Abhinava Vāgeesha Yati, who obtained the  
quintessential doctrinal tenets from Śrīmad Abhinava  
Ranganātha Yati, the initiation into the ‘fourth order of  
life’ from Śrīmad Abhinava Rāmānuja Yati, and also  
obtained the wealth of ‘ātma-yoga’ by the nectarine grace  
of Āndavan Śrī Śrīnivasa Rāmānuja Maha Deśikan!”*

नव्यवागीशयोगीन्द्रं हयास्यपदसेविनं ।  
ब्रह्मतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रार्यं भजामस्स्वात्मसंपदम् ॥

navyavāgīśa yōgīndraṃ hayāsyā padasēvinam .  
brahmatantrasvatantrāryam bhajāmassvātma sampadam ..

*“We meditate on our ‘ātma-sampadam’ (wealth of the self)  
Śrīmad Abhinava Vāgeesha Brahmatantra Swatantra Yati,  
the servant of the lotus feet of Lord Hayagreeva!”*



## Prologue

अस्मदेशिकमस्मदीयपरमाचार्यान् अशेषान् गुरून्  
श्रीमल्लक्ष्मणयोगिपुङ्गवमहापूर्णौ मुनिं यामुनं ।  
रामं पद्मविलोचनं मुनिवरं नाथं शठद्वेषिणम्  
सेनेशं श्रियमिन्दिरासहचरं नारायणं संश्रये ॥

asmaddēśikamasmadīyaparamācāryān aśēṣān gurūn  
śrīmallaṣṭmaṇayōgipuṅgavamahāpūrṇau munim yāmunam .  
rāmaṁ padmavilōcanaṁ munivaraṁ nāthaṁ śaṭhadvēṣiṇam  
sēneśaṁ śriyamindirāsahacaraṁ nārāyaṇaṁ saṁśrayē ..

*"We seek refuge in the unbroken lineage of immaculate Gurus starting with our Āchārya, up all the way to the king among ascetics- Śrī Lakshmana Muni; then to Mahāpurna, Yāmunamuni, Rāmamishra, Pundarikāksha, Śrī Nāthamuni; to Śrī Śatakopa, to Senesha, to Goddess Śrī and then finally to the foremost Āchārya- Lord Nārāyana who is inseparably united with Goddess Śrī!"*

Āchārya Rāmānuja is the resplendent central gem in the line of illustrious Āchāryas who have preserved the teaching of the Vēdānta. His system is called Rāmānuja Matham or Emperumānār Darshanam. This Sampradāya- an unbroken line of tradition- came to Rāmānuja from Lord Śrīman Nārāyana Himself, through the twelve Āḷvārs and then through Nāthamuni and Yāmunāchārya.

It is important to highlight the divine intervention of Lord Devarāja Perumāḷ of Perumāḷ Koil (Kānchipuram), in the origin, propagation and protection of this doctrine of Rāmānuja. It may be recalled that Rāmānuja was initially a disciple of Yādavaprakāsha, an Advaitin preceptor. On many occasions, Yādavaprakāsha's interpretations of Vedic passages deviated from the central teaching of Vēdānta and

Rāmānuja openly contested his views. Owing to this friction between Yādavaprakāsha and Rāmānuja, the former decided to end the latter's life by contriving an evil plan and taking him on a pilgrimage to the river Ganga. Lord Varadarāja however intervened! During the course of travel, Rāmānuja heard of the evil plot from his cousin and co-disciple Govinda, and somehow managed to break away from Yādavaprakāsha and his disciples. At that point, Lord Varadarāja along with His consort appeared as a hunter couple and guided Rāmānuja back to safety from the thick forests. Rāmānuja found himself miraculously transported to Kānchipuram during the course of one night. The hunter couple disappeared from sight after bringing him to safety. Rāmānuja at once realized that the hunter couple was none other than Lord Varadarāja with His consort Perundevi Tāyār! Considering himself blessed, Rāmānuja decided to perform the Kainkaryam of fetching water for the Tirumanjanam (daily ablutions) of Lord Varadarāja! Being a noble soul that he was, Rāmānuja continued studying under Yādavaprakāsha after his return, despite the latter's previous evil intentions.

Yāmunāchārya, who was residing at Śrīrangam, came to know of these incidents. He understood the pure intent of Rāmānuja, his divinity and his deep devotional bent of mind. He came all the way from Śrīrangam to Perumāl Koil, Kānchipuram, just to behold the young Rāmānuja. It was in the great temple of Kanchi, by the grace of Devarāja Perumāl, that Yāmunāchārya witnessed the divine personality of Rāmānuja. Circumstances were such that Yāmunāchārya was unable to have a conversation with Rāmānuja. Thinking that any interaction would affect Rāmānuja's preliminary studies (of Purva-paksha), Yāmunāchārya refrained from talking to him. Having then offered prayers to Lord Varadarāja, Yāmunāchārya wished that at some point Rāmānuja be brought into his fold, so that the capable Rāmānuja would eventually become the upholder of the Śree Vaishnava doctrine.

Lord Varada answered this prayer of Yāmuna! Rāmānuja eventually parted ways with Yādavaprakāsha and was seeking a suitable preceptor. An ailing Yāmunāchārya then commissioned his disciple Mahāpurna to bring Rāmānuja to Śrīrangam. Unfortunately, Rāmānuja arrived only after the passing away of Yāmuna, even while the last rites were about to be performed. Having prostrated to the blessed divine body of Yāmunāchārya, the mournful Rāmānuja noted that three fingers of Yāmuna's palm were folded. Beholding this unusual posture, Rāmānuja was instantly driven to proclaim three vows:

तद्व्याससूत्रं विवरीकरिष्ये तत्तातनामापि शठारिनाम ।  
युक्तं विधास्याभ्युभयोरिति व रामानुजोऽवन्दत तत्पदाब्जे ॥

tadvyāsasūtram vivarīkariṣyē tattātanāmāpi śaṭhārināma .  
yuktaṁ vidhāsyābhyubhayōritīva rāmānujōvandata tatpadābjē

*"Saying 'I shall expound the Sutras of Vyāsa; bestow the name of his father Parāshara and the name of Śatāri to two deserving persons' Rāmānuja bowed at Yāmuna's lotus feet!"*

- 1) Vyāsa Sutram Vivari Karishye /  
I will expound the sutras of Vyāsa according to their true sense!
- 2) Tat Tātah Nāma Api,  
His father's name (i.e Parāshara, the father of Vyāsa); and also
- 3) Śatāri Nāma, Yuktaṁ Ubhayor Vidhāsyām /  
the name of Śatāri, I shall bestow upon two deserving people!

-Yatirāja Vaibhavam

With the proclamation of these three vows by Rāmānuja, the three folded fingers of Yāmuna immediately restored themselves to their normal state! Lord Varadarāja had chosen Rāmānuja as the one who would fulfill the three vows of Yāmunāchārya. Having witnessed this miracle, the disciples of Yāmuna who had gathered at the banks of Tirukkāveri came to know that Rāmānuja would one day certainly become the upholder of the Śree Vaishnava doctrine. Saddened at the loss of the great Āchārya Yāmuna, Rāmānuja returned to Kānchipuram without paying obeisance to the Lord of Śrīrangam.

Lord Varadarāja's overflowing compassion continued to be bestowed upon Rāmānuja. By means of his growing devotion through the performance of service, Rāmānuja became spiritually instigated to seek the guidance of Lord Varada. This was accomplished by resorting to Tiruk-Kacchi Nambi (Kanchipurna), who was so proximate to Lord Varada that he could communicate with Him. Kanchipurna put forth the request of Rāmānuja pleading with the Lord for guidance.

### Lord Varadarāja guides Rāmānuja: The six instructions

Rāmānuja received through Kanchipurna the six instructions of Varadarāja Perumāḷ. These six instructions, imparted at the Kacchi Vaitthān Mantapam of the Kanchi temple, became the basis for the re-establishment of the Śree Vaishnava Matham by Rāmānuja. Lord Varada instructed thus:

श्रीमान् परं तत्त्वमहं मतं मे भेदः प्रपत्तिर्निरपायहेतुः ।

नावश्यकी च स्मृतिरन्त्यकाले मोक्षो महापूर्ण इहार्यवर्यः ॥

śrīmān paraṁ tattvamahaṁ mataṁ mē bhēdaḥ prapattirnirapāyahētuḥ .

nāvaśyaki ca smṛtirantyakālē mōkṣō mahāpūrṇa ihāryavaryaḥ ..

- 1) Śreemān Param Tattvam Aham  
Along with Śree, I am the Supreme Tattva!
- 2) Matham Me Bhedaha  
The doctrine of difference is the one taught by Me!
- 3) Prappatir Nirapāya Hetuhu  
Prapatti is the infallible means!
- 4) Na Avashyaki Cha Smritir  
Remembrance at the final moment is not necessary!
- 5) Antya Kale Mokshaha  
Liberation would be attained upon death!
- 6) Mahapurnam Iharya Varyaha  
Mahapurna is worth of being chosen (as the Âchārya)!

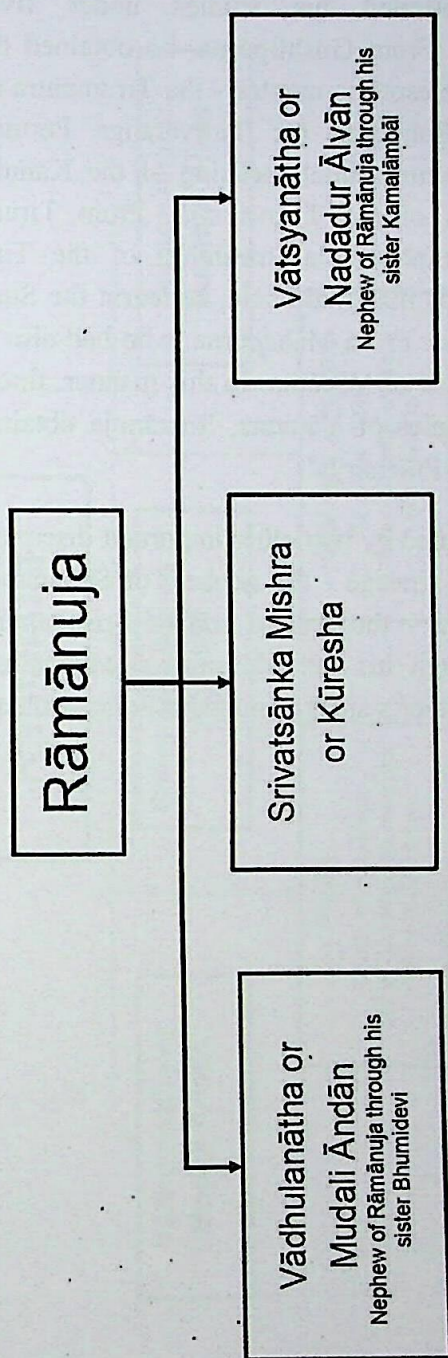
-Yatirāja Vaibhavam

These six instructions of Lord Varada served to set the platform for Rāmānuja to come under the protective guidance of Mahapurna and eventually establish the Śree Vaishnava doctrine. He was initiated into the Pancha Samskāras and the Mantras by Mahapurna at Madhurāntakam. These events also led Rāmānuja to eventually carry out the three wishes of Yāmunāchārya.

In due course of time, Rāmānuja decided to enter Sannyāsa -the fourth order of life. Having bathed in the holy waters of the Pushkarini in Perumāl Koil- the great temple of Kanchi, Rāmānuja adorned the saffron robes, took up the triple staff (Tridandam), and became initiated into Sannyāsa by Lord Devarāja Perumāl Himself. Rāmānuja had already received the necessary mantra for the initiation into Sannyāsa, and this was approved by Lord Varada

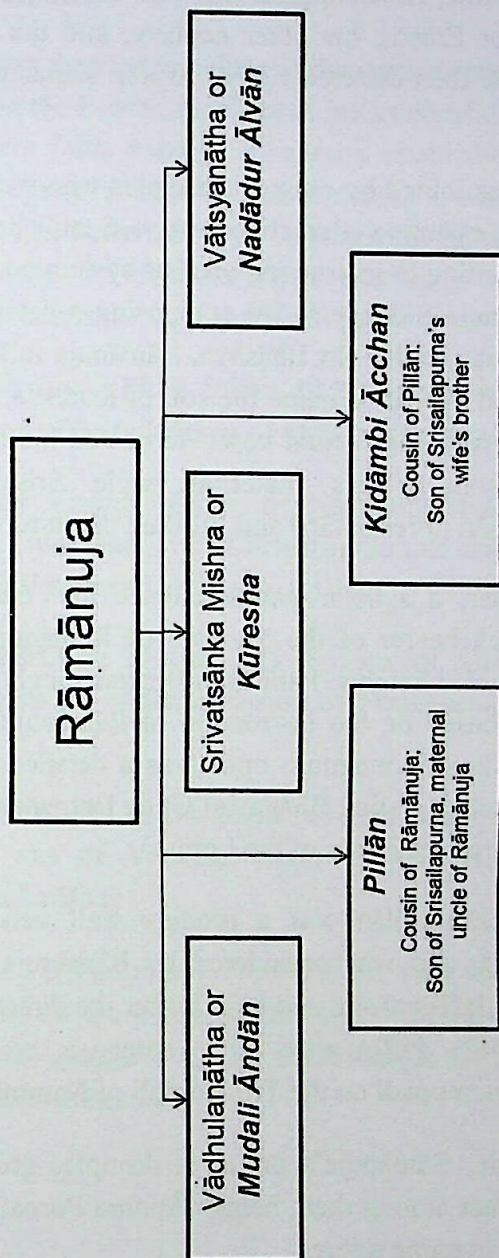
through the agency of the priest. To our Rāmānuja, the Lord bestowed the title ‘Yatirāja’, the Emperor among ascetics!

At this point, he was joined by three important disciples- Kūresha, who came from the place called Kūram; Vātsyanātha (or Nadādur Ājvān), the nephew of Rāmānuja through his sister Kamalāmbāl; and Vādhulanātha (or Mudali Āndān), the nephew of Rāmānuja through his other sister Bhumidevi.



Rāmānuja continued his studies under five disciples of Yāmunāchārya. From Goshtipurna, he obtained the quintessential meanings of the esoteric mantras- the Tirumantra and the Charama Śloka. From Rangesha (or Tiruvaranga Perumāḷ Arayar), he received the quintessential meaning of the Kanninum Siruttāmbu and the verses of the Tiruvaimoḷi. From Tirumalaiyāndān, he imbibed the quintessential meanings of the Tiruvaimoḷi. From Śrisailapurna, his maternal uncle, he learnt the Sharanāgati Shāstra or the Rāmāyana. From Mahapurna, who had also initiated him, he learnt the essence of Vēdānta. In this manner, through each one of these five disciples of Yāmuna, Rāmānuja obtained the nectarine teachings of his Prāchārya!

He was then joined by two other important disciples- Pranatārtihara of the Kidāmbi lineage - the nephew of Śrisailapurna through his wife; and Pillān - the second son of Śrisailapurna. Pillān was therefore (through his father's side) a cousin to Rāmānuja and (through his mother's side) a cousin to Pranatārtihara.



At around this time, Śrisailapurna was also successful in bringing back Govinda or Embār, his other nephew, into the fold of Śree Vaishnavism. He then directed Embār to join Rāmānuja and serve at his feet.

Having been thus joined by eminent disciples who were constantly at his service, Rāmānuja systematized and re-established the system of Vêdānta according to its true import. His system now came to be called as Rāmānuja Siddhānta! By composing a detailed gloss on the Vêdānta Sūtras, called Śrī Bhāshya, Rāmānuja fulfilled his first vow. He directed Embār to name the son of Kūresha, as Parāshara Bhattar and satisfied the second vow. He named his cousin Pillān, the younger son of his maternal uncle Śrisailapurna, as Tirukkurukai Pirān (after Śātāri) and fulfilled the third vow.

Parāshara Bhattar, a scholar par-excellence in Vêdānta, was to become the torch bearer of the Matham of Rāmānuja, raising its glory to unparalleled heights. Parāshara Bhattar sought refuge at the feet of Embār, based on the instruction of Rāmānuja. Apart from many other works, his magnum opus was a detailed gloss on the Vishnu Sahasranāma, called Bhagavad Guna Darpanam, explaining the thousand divine attributes of the Lord.

Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān was a prodigy well versed with the Ubhaya Vêdānta, and was considered by Rāmānuja as his own 'Jnāna-Putra' or spiritual son and heir. Under the direct guidance of Âchārya Rāmānuja, Pillān went on to compose the commentary called Tiru Ārāyiarappadi on the Tiruvaimoḷi of Nammāḷvār.

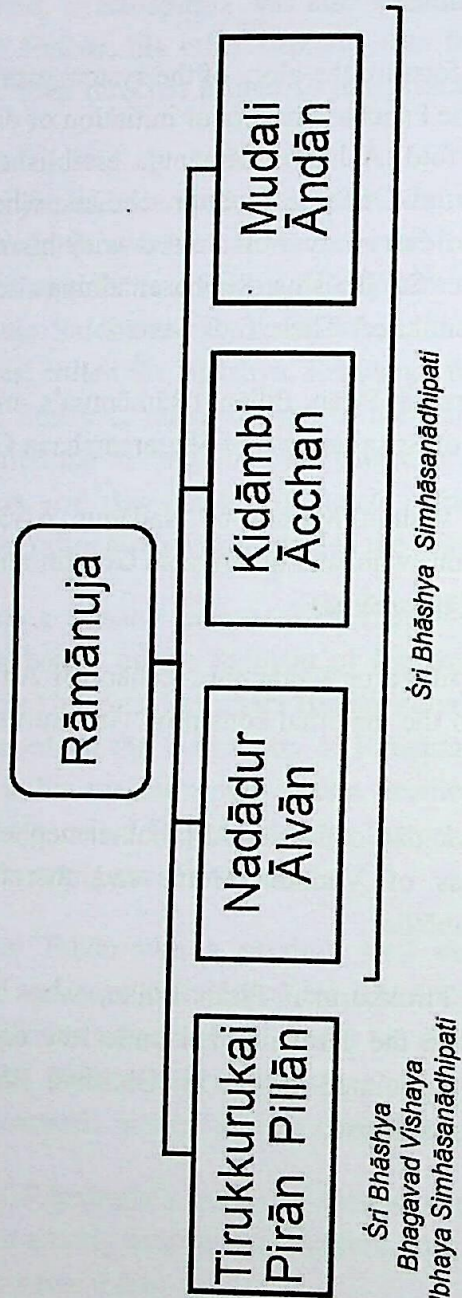
In the meanwhile, Rāmānuja's group of disciples grew manifold; the other important among them being- Āndhra Purna; Anantālvān; and Dhanurdāsa to name a few.

### **Simhāsanādhipatis:**

In order to carry forward the glory of the system established by him, and to perform the Panchasamskāra or initiation of disciples into the Śree Vaishnava fold, Āchārya Rāmānuja established seventy four 'Simhāsanādhipatis'. Of these 74, four scholars, who were intimate to Rāmānuja and extremely well versed with his teachings, were considered as the 'Śri Bhāshya Simhāsanādhipati' or 'Śri Bhāshya Pravachana Durandhara'. These four were:

- 1) Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān (Rāmānuja's maternal cousin, and son of Śrisailapurna of Shatamarshana Gotra),
- 2) Varada Vishnu Mishra or Nadādur Ālvān (Rāmānuja's sisters son, who was of Śrīvatsa Gotram and therefore also called Vātsyanātha)
- 3) Pranatārtihara or Kaidambi Ācchan (of Ātreya Gotra, who was also the maternal cousin of Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān) and
- 4) Mudaliyāndān or Dasarathi (another nephew of Rāmānuja, who was of Vādhula Gotra and therefore also called Vādhulanātha)

Of these four, Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān, who had composed a scholarly gloss on the Tiruvaimozhi under the direct guidance of Rāmānuja, was appointed as the Śri Bhāshya Bhagavad Vishaya Ubhaya Simhāsanādhipati.



After the ascent of Rāmānuja to Vaikuntam, the profound knowledge contained in the Śrī Bhāshya and the Bhagavad Vishayam was carried forward by his proximate disciples. We shall now trace the succession lineage of the Simhāsanādhipatis.

### 1) The disciplinic succession of Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān

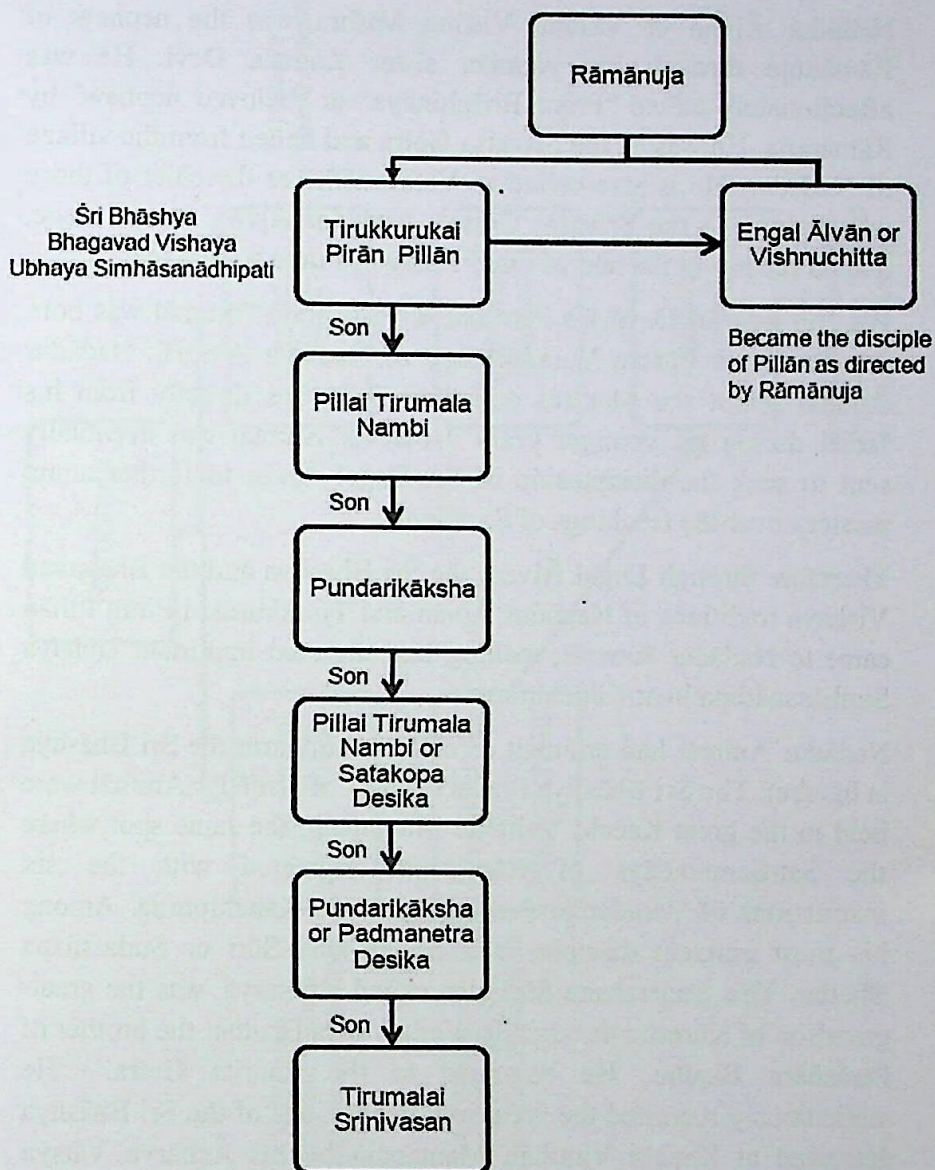
Pillān was the second son of Śrī Saila Purna. He was therefore the cousin of Rāmānuja and of Embār; who were the sons of the two sisters of Śrī Saila Purna. He belonged to the Shatamarshana Gotra. Pillān however was very much younger to Rāmānuja; and Rāmānuja considered Pillān to be his own Spiritual-son. Owing to the scholarly brilliance of Pillān, Rāmānuja ordained that Pillān compose a detailed gloss on Tiruvaimoḷi- the sacred composition of Nammāḷvār. Under Rāmānuja's direct guidance, Pillān wrote the Tiru Ārāyarappadi, a commentary on the Tiruvaimoḷi of Nammāḷvār. Pillān's work forms the basis for all expositions of Bhagavad Vishayam by later Āchāryas.

Pillān was a special disciple of Rāmānuja. Due to his closeness to Rāmānuja, he understood the mind of Rāmānuja very well. To Pillān, Rāmānuja bequeathed several important Mantra Rahasyas. Pillān was also the author of a detailed treatise on the Mantrartha Rahasyas. This work is no longer extant.

Pillān had a son named Pundarikāksha. Although the Sampradāya of Rāmānuja has continued unbroken in this familial succession of Pillān, the latter's foremost disciple was Śrī Vishnu Chitta or Engal Āḷvān. When young Vishnu Chitta came to seek discipleship under Rāmānuja, the latter instructed him to seek the feet of Pillān for initiation into the doctrinal truths. Vishnu Chitta was fondly called by Rāmānuja as 'Engal Āḷvān', or 'Our Āḷvān'. Engal Āḷvān learnt the Śrī Bhāshya and Bhagavad Vishayam directly under Pillān, the Ubhaya Simhāsanādhipati. Engal Āḷvān was himself one among the 74 Simhāsanādhipatis appointed by Rāmānuja. At his home town

Thiruvellarai, he served Lord Pundarikāksha Perumāl. Engal Āļvān belonged to the Shatamarshana Gotra.

Another prominent disciple of Pillān was Somayāji Āndān (also called Ramamishra, he was the author of 'Shadārthasankshepa' which is no longer extant). Somayāji Āndān was a direct disciple of Rāmānuja. When Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān went to his place in Śrīvilliputtur, Somayāji Āndān studied the Śrī Bhāshya from him not once, but three times! This shows the profound knowledge that Pillān had in the Śrī Bhāshya as well! It is for this reason that Pillān was named by Rāmānuja as the Śrī Bhāshya-Bhagavad Vishaya-Ubhaya Simhāsanādhipati!



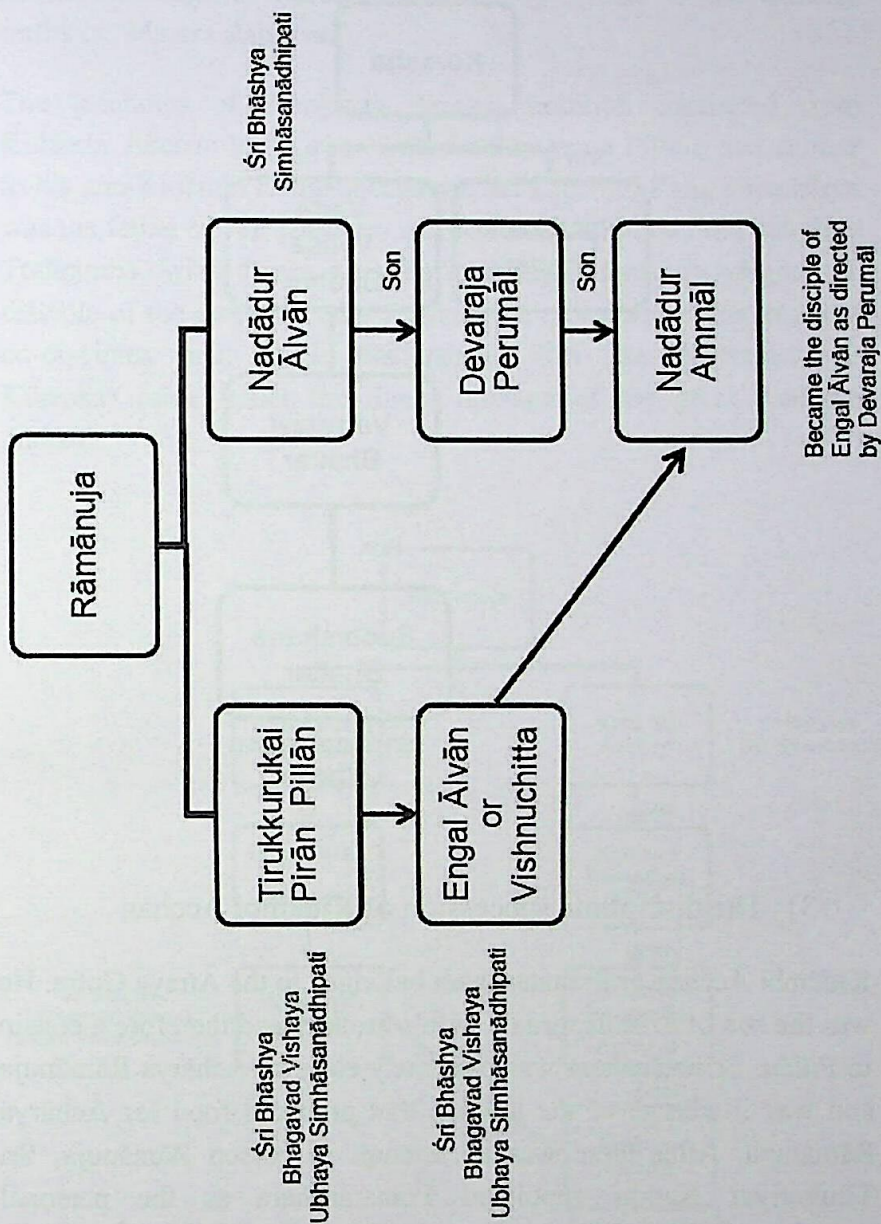
## 2) The disciplinic succession of Nadādur Āļvān

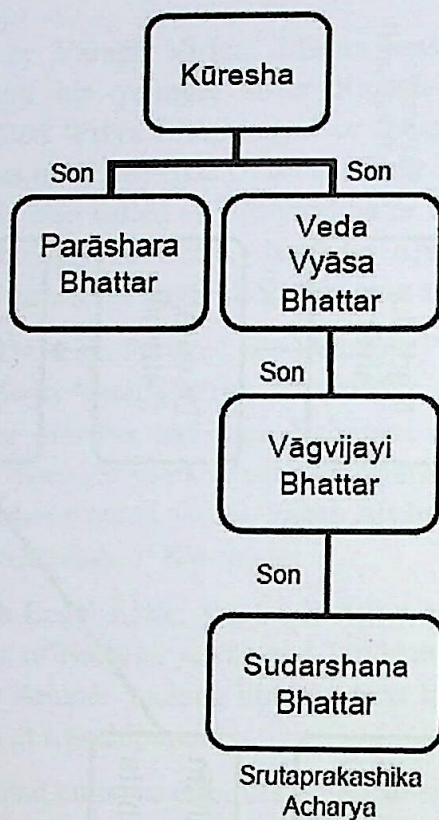
Nadādur Āļvān or Varada Vishnu Mishra was the nephew of Rāmānuja through his younger sister Kamala Devi. He was affectionately called 'Priya Bhāghineya' or 'beloved nephew' by Rāmānuja. He was of the Śrīvatsa Gotra and hailed from the village of Nadādur. He is also called as Vātsyanātha or the chief of those who belong to the Śrīvatsa Gotra. Nadādur Āļvān, at one stage, helped recording the text of the Śrī Bhāshya onto a palm leaf.

His son was Śrī Devarāja Perumāl. To Devarāja Perumāl was born the illustrious Vātsya Varadāchārya or Nadādur Ammāl. Nadādur Ammāl learnt the Mantras and their Rahasyas directly from his father during his younger years. However Ammāl was eventually sent to seek the discipleship of Śrī Engal Āļvān to further attain mastery over the teachings of Rāmānuja.

Therefore through Engal Āļvān, the Śrī Bhāshya and the Bhagavad Vishaya traditions of Nadādur Āļvān and Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān came to Nadādur Ammāl, making him the next important Ubhaya Simhāsanādipathi at Kānchipuram.

Nadādur Ammāl had eminent disciples who learnt the Śrī Bhāshya at his feet. The Śrī Bhāshya Pravachanams of Nadādur Ammāl were held in the great Kacchi Vaitthān Mantapam, the same spot where the Sat-Sampradāya of Rāmānuja originated with the six instructions of Varadarāja Perumāl given to Kanchipurna. Among his most eminent disciples was Sudarshana Sūri or Sudarshana Bhattar. This Sudarshana Sūri also called Vyāsarya, was the great-grandson of Kūresha through Śrī Veda Vyāsa Bhattar, the brother of Parāshara Bhattar. He belonged to the Haarita Gotra. He meticulously recorded the great oral expositions of the Śrī Bhāshya delivered at Kacchi Vaitthān Mantapam by his Āchārya Vātsya Varadaguru. These collected notes became the seed for the birth of two great commentaries written by him on the Śrī Bhāshya - the elaborate Śruta Prakāshika and the abridged Śruta Pradeepika. Sudarshana Sūri therefore was also called as Śruta Prakāshikāchārya.



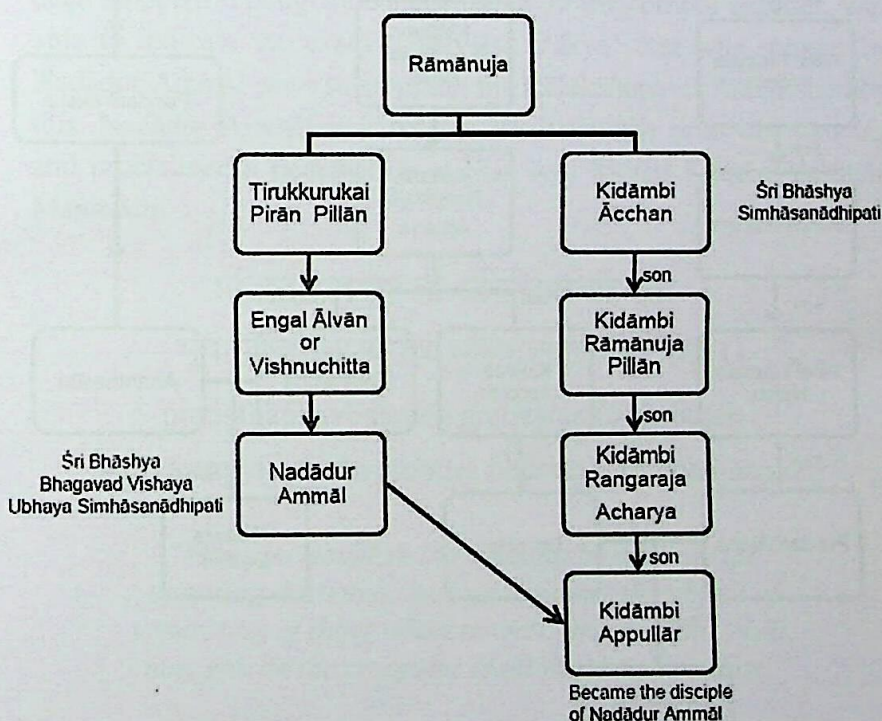


### 3) The disciplinic succession of Kidāmbi Ācchan

Kidāmbi Ācchan or Pranatārtihara belonged to the Âtreya Gotra. He was the son of Śrisailapurna's wife's brother; and therefore a cousin to Pillān. Pranatārtihara was extremely close to Âchārya Rāmānuja and was in charge of the kitchen that prepared food for Âchārya Rāmānuja. After there was an attempt to poison Rāmānuja, Śri Tirukotiyur Nambi appointed Pranatārtihara as the personal attendant of Rāmānuja, so that he could take care of the Âchārya's kitchen. He is therefore also called as 'Madappalli Ācchan'. By his close association and devout service to the Âchārya, and by repeated hearing of the quintessential Vedāntic truths from

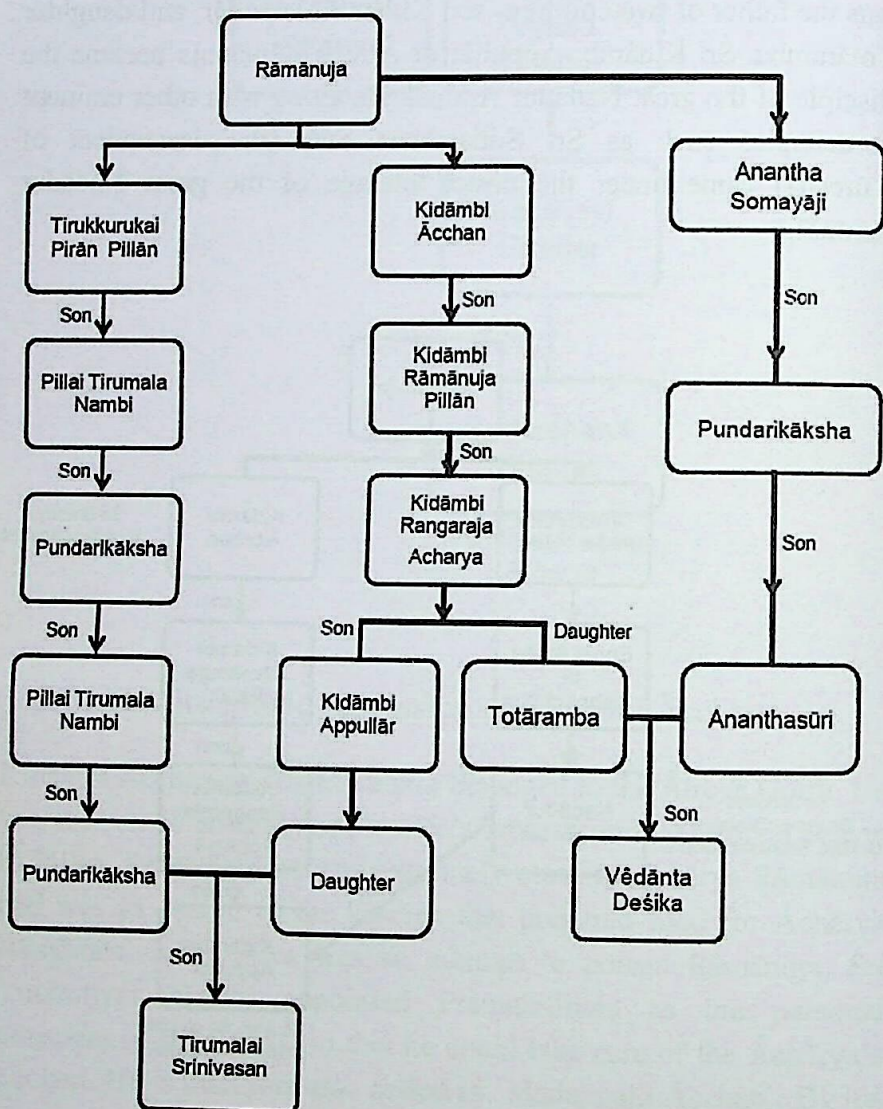
Rāmānuja himself, Kidāmbi Ācchan became extremely well versed in the teachings of Rāmānuja, especially related to the esoteric truths or 'Mantra Rahasyas'.

The teachings of Rāmānuja through tradition continued from Kidāmbi Ācchan to his son Kidāmbi Rāmānuja Pillān; and further to his son Kidāmbi Rangarajāchārya. Śrī Kidāmbi Rangarajāchārya was the father of two children- son Kidāmbi Appullār, and daughter Totāramba. Śrī Kidāmbi Appullār or Ātreya Rāmānuja became the disciple of the great Nadādur Ammāl. He along with other eminent co-disciples such as Śrī Sudarshana Sūri (the descendent of Kūresha) came under the direct tutelage of the great Nadādur Ammāl.



Totāramba, the sister of Kidāmbi Appullār, was married to Śrī Ananthasuri Somayaji, who himself was a descendent of one of the 74 Simhāsanādipathis appointed by Rāmānuja. To this couple was born the great Vêdānta Deśika.

Kidāmbi Appullār had a daughter who was married off to Pundarikāksha, the fourth in the lineage of Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān.



## Benediction upon Vêdānta Deśika:

On one occassion, Âtreya Rāmānuja happened to take his young nephew of five years, Vênkatanātha, to the Kālakshepam of Vātsya Varadārya. This was being delivered at the very Kacchi Vaitthān Mantapam where Lord Varadarāja had previously imparted the six teachings to Rāmānuja through Tirukkachi Nambi. Attracted by the brilliance that shone on the face of this young child, Vātsya Varadaguru momentarily stopped the Kālakshepam to cast compassionate glances on the child. At this point, he was unable to link to the particular verse that he was speaking about and began to wonder where he had stopped. The disciples at the Kālakshepam, enamored by the brilliance of the countenance of young Vênkatanātha, also forgot the exact point where the discourse had been stopped! Young Vênkatanātha, in an impromptu manner, was able to indicate the exact ‘Upanyāsa Vākya’ that was spoken by Nadādur Ammāl prior to stopping his Kālakshepam! Astonished by this, Nadādur Ammāl took young Vênkatanātha onto his own lap and proclaimed a benediction at that very sacred Kacchi Vaitthān Mantapam:

प्रतिष्ठापितवेदान्तः प्रतिक्षिप्तबहिर्मतः ।

भूयास्त्रैविद्यमान्यस्त्वं भूरिकल्याणभाजनम् ॥

pratiṣṭhāpitavêdāntaḥ pratikṣiptabahirmataḥ .

bhūyāstraividyamānyastvaṃ bhūrikalyāṇa bhājanam ..

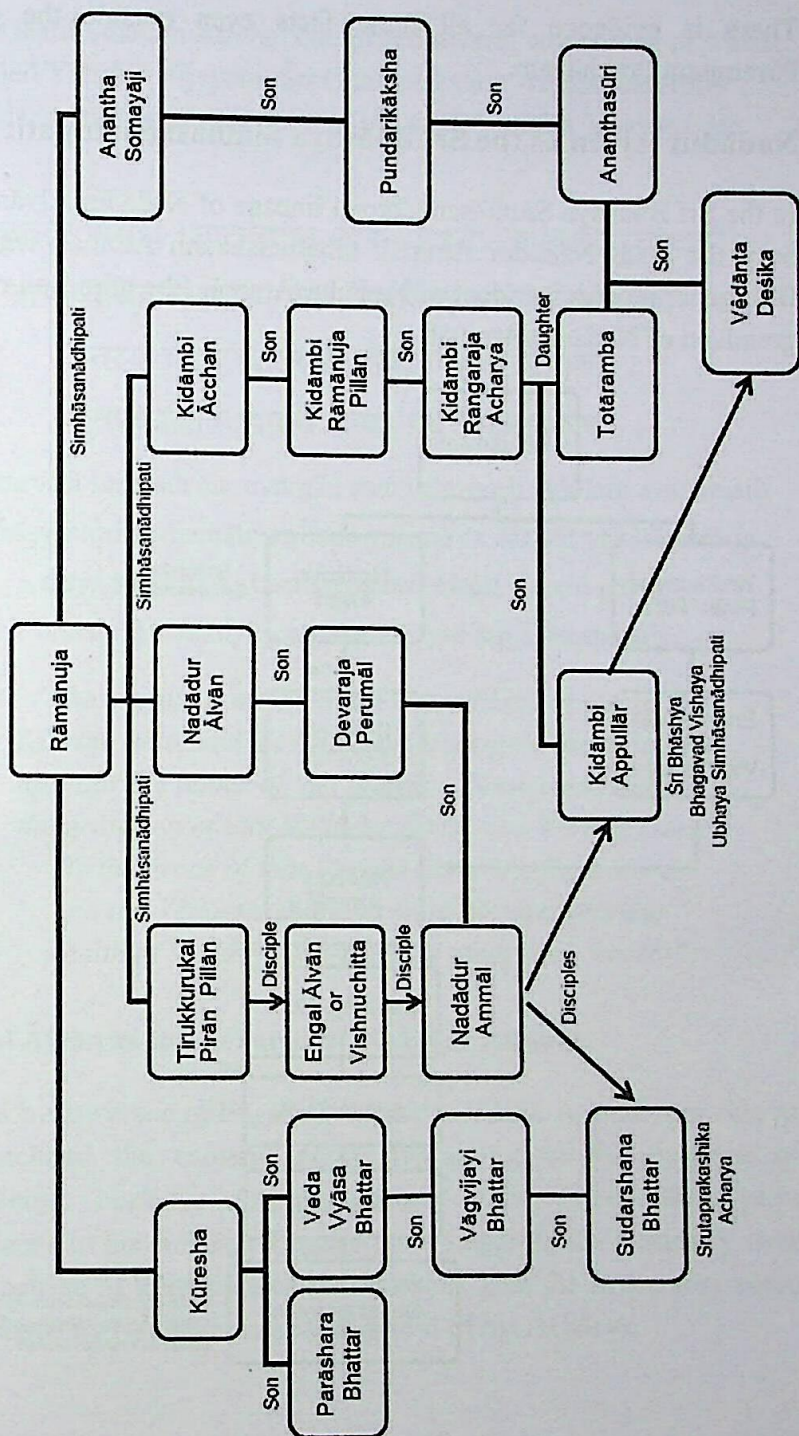
*“May you establish the Vêdānta by refuting the opposing doctrines, may you become the object of veneration of those who are well versed in the Vêdā, may you be the receipient of all that is auspicious!”*

This verse is quoted by Śrī Deśika himself as the 25<sup>th</sup> verse in the second chapter of his work Sankalpa Suryodaya.

Following this benediction, Âtreya Rāmānuja was commanded by Vātsya Varadāchārya to impart the teachings of the doctrine of Rāmānuja to Śrī Vêdānta Deśika; just as Rāmānuja had previously asked Pillān to instruct Engal Āļvān in the doctrinal tenets. Thus, the Sat Sampradāya or the 'impeccable tradition' continued. After residing at Kanchi and delivering discourses on the Rāmānuja Siddhānta for many years, Vêdānta Deśika moved to Śrirangam for some time.

At this juncture, history also witnessed the great sacking of Śrirangam in the hands of the Turushka invaders. During this difficult period, the aged Sudarshana Sūri handed over the care of his two sons and the manuscripts of the two 'Śruta' texts to Vêdānta Deśika for protection.

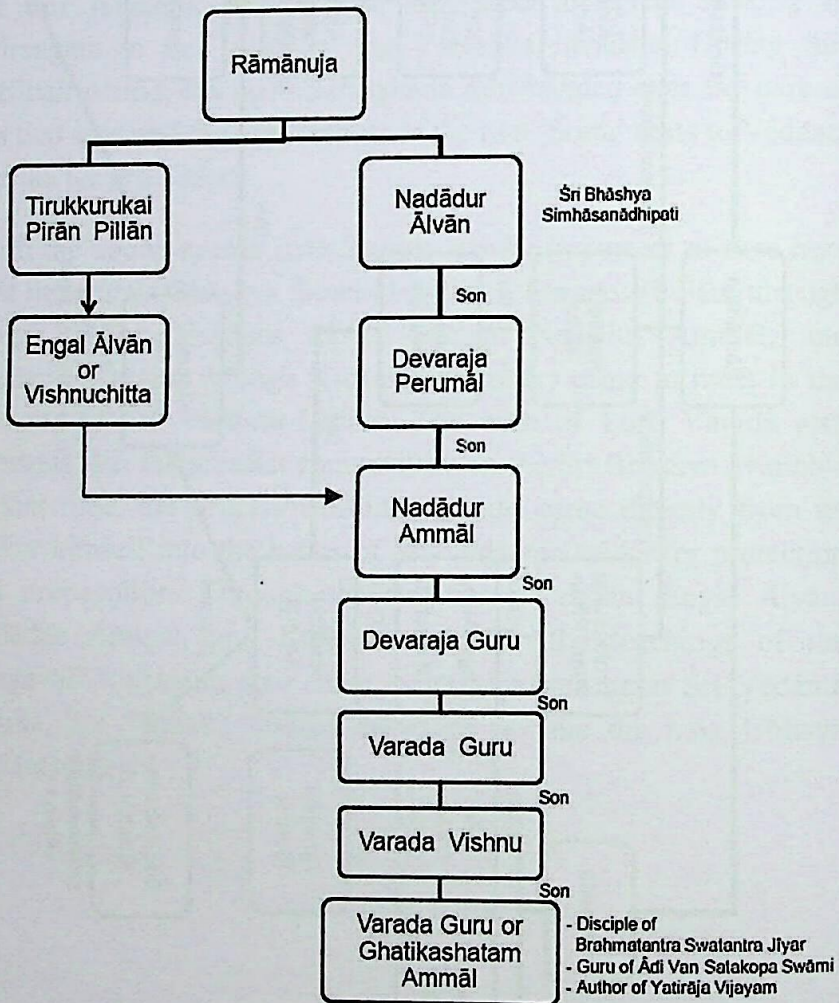
With the above events unfolding, it is very important to note here that three great Bhāshya Simhāsanādhipati lineages (Pillān, through Engal Āļvān; Nadādur Āļvān through Nadādur Ammāl; and Kidāmbi Ācchan through Kidāmbi Appullār) came to meet in the persona of Śrī Vêdānta Deśika. The wish of Lord Varada also ordained that the greatest commentary on the Śrī Bhāshya available at that time, the Śruta Prakāshika, should come directly from its author himself into the hands of Śrī Vêdānta Deśika for protection and propagation. Through the tradition of Pillān, Engal Āļvān, Nadādur Ammāl, and Kidāmbi Appullār the teachings of the Bhagavad Vishayam also came to be bestowed upon Śrī Vêdānta Deśika. Śrī Vêdānta Deśika therefore became the next Ubhaya Vedāntāchārya!



There is evidence for all these facts even outside the Guru Parampara Prabhāvam.

### Nadādur Ālvān as the Śrī Bhāshya Simhāsanādhipati:

In the Śrī Bhāshya Simhāsanādhipati lineage of Nadādur Ālvān was born the great Nadādur Ammāl! Ghatikashatam Ammal, was the fifth generation descendent of Nadādur Ammāl (the grandson of the grandson of Nadadur Ammāl).



This Ghatikashatam Ammal composed several works, one of which is called Yatirāja Vijayam. Śrī Ghatikashatam Ammal carefully records several important facts in his work Yatirāja Vijayam. He says:

सत्कुर्वता संसदि शिष्यवर्गान् अनन्यलभ्यैः अखिलैः स्वचिह्नैः ।

श्रीभाष्यसिंहासनमात्मनीनम् यस्यै च दत्तं यतिशेखरेण ॥

तस्य वेदान्तकूटस्थः पौत्रोऽभूद्वरदो गुरुः ।

श्रुतप्रकाशिकाद्याश्च ग्रन्था यद् शिष्यसम्पदः ॥

satkurvatā saṁsadi śiṣyavargān ananyalabyaiḥ akhilaiḥ svacihnaiḥ  
śrībhāṣyasimhāsanamātmnīnam yasmai ca dattaṁ yatiśēkharēṇa ..

tasya vēdānta kūṭasthaḥ pautrōabhūd varadō guruḥ .

śrutaprakāśikādyāśca granthāḥ yad śiṣya saṁpadaḥ ..

*"The one upon whom, in the assemblage of disciples,  
Yatirāja bestowed his own unique insignia including the  
appropriate honor of 'Śrī Bhāshya Simhāsanādhipati',  
the grandson of that Nadādur Āḷvān was Varada Guru!  
By the grace of that Varada Guru- the final word  
on the Vēdānta, disciples were blessed with the  
wealth of Śrūta Prakāshika and other such works!"*

### Engal Āḷvān as the Āchārya of Nadādur Ammāl:

It was by the grace of Engal Āḷvān that Nadādur Ammāl was able to comprehend the esoteric points pertaining to the doctrine of Rāmānuja. Nadādur Ammāl, in his work Tattva Sāra, pays obeisance to his Āchārya Engal Āḷvān. Engal Āḷvān's mastery over the doctrine of Rāmānuja can be inferred from the invocatory verse composed by Nadādur Ammāl in praise of his Āchārya.

श्रीविष्णुचित्तपदपङ्कजसंगमाय  
चेतो मम स्पृहयते किमतः परेण ।  
नो चेन्ममापि यतिशेखरभारतीनां  
भावः कथं भवितुमर्हति वाग्विधेयः ॥

śrīviṣṇucittapadapaṅkajasangamāya  
cētō mama spr̥hayatē kimataḥ parēṇa .  
nō cēnmamāpi yatīśēkharabhāratīnām  
bhāvaḥ katham bhavitumarhati vāgvidhēyaḥ ..

*"My mind desires contact with the lotus feet of Śrī Vishnuchitta, beyond which there is nothing superior! Without such contact how could a person like me ever comprehend and express in words, the utterances of the Emperor among ascetics?"*

-Invocatory Śloka of the Tattva Sāra

### Nadādur Ammāl as an authority on Śrī Bhāshya:

Having been blessed with the teachings of doctrinal tenets through two Âchārya lineages {1) Ubhaya Vêdānta Simhāsanādhipati lineage of Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān and Engal Ālvān, and 2) the Śrī Bhāshya Simhāsanādhipati lineage of Nadādur Ālvān} Nadādur Ammāl himself became a prime exponent of the Rāmānuja doctrine. He was one of the greatest Ubhaya Vêdānta Âchāryas! His profundity of knowledge and in depth understanding of the teachings of Rāmānuja is depicted in the words of his foremost disciple Śrī Sudarshana Sūri who composed the following verse in praise of Nadādur Ammāl,

वन्देऽहं वरदार्यं तं वत्साभिजनभूषणम् ।  
भाष्यामृतप्रदानाद्यः सञ्जीवयति मामपि ॥  
vandēhaṁ varadāryaṁ taṁ vatsābhijanabhūṣaṇam .  
bhāṣyāmṛtapradānādyāḥ sañjīvayati māmapi .

*"I bow unto that Varadārya, the treasure-jewel among the descendents of the Śrī Vatsa Gotra, the one who enlivened me by imparting the nectarine secrets of the Śrī Bhāṣhya and other such important works!"*

गुरुभ्योऽर्थः श्रुतः शब्दैस्तत्प्रयुक्तैश्च योजितः ।

सौकर्याय बुभुत्सूनां सङ्कलय्य प्रकाशयते ॥

gurubhyōrthaḥ śrutaḥ śabdaistatprayuktaiśca yōjitaḥ .

saukaryāya bubhutsūnāṃ saṅkalayya prakāśyatē ..

*"Having heard directly from my Guru, I hereby collect and publish those same words that were uttered by him, for the benefit of those people who have a genuine thirst for wisdom!"*

-Invocatory Śloka of the Śrūta Prakāśhika

**Nadādur Ammāl as the Prāchārya of Śrī Deśika:**

Vêdānta Deśika was a much younger contemporary of Nadādur Ammāl. Deśika was only five years old when Ammāl bestowed his blessings on him. It may be recalled that Rāmānuja directed Pillān to instruct Engal Ālvān in the doctrinal tenets. Similarly, Nadādur Ammāl directed Kidāmbi Appullār to instruct Vêdānta Deśika in the doctrinal tenets. Nadādur Ammāl therefore becomes the Prāchārya of Vêdānta Deśika. This has been indicated by Deśika himself in several works of his.

श्रीमद्भ्यां स्यादसावित्यनुपधि वरदाचार्यरामानुजाभ्यां  
सम्यग्दृष्टेन सर्वसहनिशितधिया वेङ्कटेशेन क्लृप्तः ।  
सेव्योऽसौ शान्तचित्तैः श्रवणरसनया शान्तिलाभार्थिभिर्वा  
सिद्धः शारीरकार्थे सहजबहुगुणः स्रग्धरादुग्धराशिः ॥

śrīmadbhyāṃ syādasāvityanupadhi varadācāryarāmānujābhyāṃ  
samyagdr̥ṣṭēna sarvaṃsahaniśitatadhiyā vēṇkaṭēśēna kl̥ptaḥ .  
sēvyōsau śāntacittaiḥ śravaṇarasanayā śāntilābhārthibhirvā .  
siddh śārīrakārthē sahajabahugunaḥ sragdharādugdharāśīḥ ..

*“Being blessed by (Prācharya) Varadāchārya and (Āchārya)  
Ātreya Rāmānuja to attain the Supreme knowledge;  
I, the one named Venkatesa, became endowed with the  
ability to accurately comprehend the true import of  
everything, and thereby composed this work.  
This work is verily a milk-ocean of the essence  
of Śariraka Shastra, and is composed in the  
Sragdhara meter. May those who are endowed  
with or have the desire to attain the wealth of subdued  
mind enjoy this milk with their ears as the organ of taste!”*

-Mangala Ślokas of the Adhikarana Sārāvali

नानासिद्धान्तनीतिश्रमविमलधियोऽनन्तसूरेस्तनूजः  
वैश्वामित्रस्य पौत्रो विततमखविधेः पुण्डरीकाक्षसूरेः ।  
श्रुत्वा रामानुजार्यात्सदसदपि ततस्तत्त्वमुक्ताकलापं  
व्यातानीद्वेङ्कटेशो वरदगुरुकृपालम्बितोद्धामभूमा ॥  
nānāsiddhāntanītiśramavimaladhiyōnantasūrēstanūjaḥ .  
vaiśvāmitrasya pautrō vitatamakhavidhēḥ puṇḍarīkākṣasūrēḥ ..  
śrutvā rāmānujāryātsadasadapi tatattattvamuktākālāpam  
vyātānīdvēṇkaṭēśō varadagurukṛpālambitōddhāmabhūmā ..

*“Being the son of Ananthasūri- the one whose mind had  
become pure by the study of various scriptures;  
and the grandson of Pundarikāksha of the Vishwamitra  
gotra- who performed numerous Yajnas; this Vēnkatesha  
who was the receptacle of the abundant grace of  
Śri Varada Guru, having heard from Ātreya Rāmānuja*

*regarding what is correct (doctrine of Ramanuja)  
and false (opposing doctrines), hereby composes  
the Tattva Mukta Kalāpam!"*

-Mangala Śloka of the Tattva Mukta Kalāpa

**Engal Ālvān, Nadādur Ammāl, Sudarshana Sūri and Kidāmbi Appullār as authorities on the Śrī Bhāshya:**

In his Adhikarana Sārāvali, Śrī Vēdānta Deśika refers to five scholars of the Vēdānta Sūtra Bhāshyas. He says:

यत् तत् सेनेश्वरार्यैरगणि वकुलभृत्किङ्करैरङ्ग्यकारि  
व्यासार्यैर्यासि च (तद्) द्विः श्रुतमिति विशदं विष्णुचित्तैर्विवरे ।  
अश्रौषं शेषकल्पादहमपि यदिदं (विदुषो) वादिहंसाम्बुवाहात्  
अद्धा निर्धार्यतेऽतश्चतुरधिकरणी ब्रह्मचिन्तोपयुक्ता (द्यमार्था) ॥

yat tat sēnēśvarāryairagaṇi vakulabhṛtkiṅkarairāṅgyakāri  
vyāsāryairnyāsi ca (tad) dviḥ śrutamiti viśadaṁ viṣṇucittairvivavrē .  
aśrauṣaṁ śēṣakalpādahamapi yadidaṁ (viduṣō) vādihaṁsāmbuvāhāt .  
addhā nirdhāryatētaścaturadhikaraṇī brahmatintōpayuktā (dyamārthā) ..

*"This view has been propounded by Seneshvarāchārya, and  
Vakula Bhrit Kinkara. It has been detailed by Vyāsarya in the  
two Śrūta's and the same has been unveiled in the works of  
Vishuchitta. I have also heard the same from the great scholar  
Vadihamsambuvaha, whose wisdom knows no bounds, like that of  
Sesha. Therefore, I conclude that, the four Adhikaranas are  
introductory with regards to the enquiry into Brahman"*

-Adhikarana Sārāvali 25

Śrī Kumāra Varadāchārya's commentary 'Chintamani' further throws some light on these scholars.

Seneshvararya was the most intimate and noble attendant of Lord Ranganātha and was the author of the work called as 'Nyayakalāpa Sangraha'. This work is currently available, but we do not know much about this scholar.

Vakulabhritkinkara has been identified in the Chintamani as 'Varadanarayana Bhattaraka'. He composed a work called 'Nyaya Sudarshana' and 'Prajna Paritraana'. From the Nyaya Parisuddhi of Vêdānta Deśika, it is known that Śrī Varadanarayana Bhattaraka was a disciple of Śrī Varada Vishnu Mishra or Nadādur Ājvān.

Vyāsarya is the name given to Śrī Sudarshana Sūri, the son of Vāgvijayi- who himself was the grandson of Kūresha through Śrī Veda Vyāsa Bhattar, the brother of Parāshara Bhattar. Śrī Sudarshana Sūri, as indicated earlier, was the author of two important works among many others- the Śruta Prakāshika and the Śruta Pradeepika.

Śrī Vishnu Chitta or Engal Ājvān was born in the Gotra of Shatamarshana and authored the work called 'Prameya Sangraha'. He was held in high esteem by all Āchāryas. This work Prameya Sangraha is not extant now, however Śrī Vishnu Chitta has also authored a commentary on the Vishnu Purāna called 'Vishnu-Chittiya'. From the Nyaya Parisuddhi of Vêdānta Deśika, we know of one more work attributed to this Āchārya called 'Sangati Mala', which was a treatise on the Vêdānta Sutra in line with the teachings of the Śrī Bhāshya. Engal Ājvān also composed the 'Sārārtha Chatushtayam'.

Vadihamsambuvāha was none other than 'Kidāmbi Appullār' or 'Ātreya Rāmānuja', the maternal uncle and immediate Āchārya of Vêdānta Deśika. Therefore Śrī Deśika uses the expression "I have heard from Vadihamsambuvāha". Being the disciple of the great Vātsya Varadāchārya, Kidāmbi Appullār was unconquerable in

debate with opponents. Therefore he is called as 'Vadihamsambuvāha', i.e. 'the water bearing cloud for the swans in the form of opponents'.

The point of the above detailed explanation is to indicate that the Śrī Bhāshya scholars of the post-Rāmānuja period, all owe their disciplinic succession in some way or the other to one of the four Śrī Bhāshya Simhāsanādipathis. This is the manner in which traditional knowledge of the Bhāshya and Bhagavad Vishayam was carried forth and ultimately culminated in Śrī Vêdānta Deśika!

### **The Spiritual Kitchen of Rāmānuja and the Sat-Sampradāya of Madaippalli Ācchan:**

It is well known from the Guruparampara Prabhāvam that Pranatārthihara, based on the direction of Tirukkottiyur Nambi, attended to the kitchen of Rāmānuja. Therefore he was called as the 'Mahānasika' (cook) of Rāmānuja. Due to the constant service rendered to Rāmānuja, Kidāmbi Ācchan developed unparalleled closeness with the Āchārya. Out of affection and compassion to his devout disciple, Rāmānuja himself taught the tenets of the Śrī Bhāshya to Kidāmbi Ācchan. He also bequeathed to Ācchan special doctrinal secrets pertaining to Goddess Śree and Her real nature. Just as he revealed to Pillān, Rāmānuja also initiated Ācchan into the esoteric meanings of the Mantras. These Tattvas of Goddess Śree and also other Mantra Rahasyas which were revealed directly by Rāmānuja to Kidāmbi Ācchan were then taught by the latter to deserving disciples. They were also preserved by the familial succession in the lineage of Kidāmbi Ācchan.

In this familial as well as disciplinic succession comes the great grandson of Ācchan, Kidāmbi Appullār. Having been initiated into these doctrinal truths, Appullār then taught them to Vêdānta Deśika. Vêdānta Deśika refers to this fact in several works of his, where he says

यतिवरणार् मडैपळ्ळि वन्दमनम् ँगळ् वार्तैयुळ् मन्नियदे  
yativarāṇār maḍaipalḷi vandamanam eṅgaḷ vārtaiyuḷ manniyadē

*"The same fragrance that entered into Yatirāja's kitchen, is firmly ingrained in our words!"*

Also, in the concluding section of the Rahasya Traya Sāra which is an elaborate treatise that deals with the same doctrinal secrets, Vêdānta Deśika indicates the transmission of these quintessential esoteric truths through an unbroken succession:

इति यतिराजमहानसपरिमळपरिवाहवासितां पिबत ।  
विबुधपरिषन्निषेव्यां वेदान्तोदयनस्सम्प्रदायसुधाम् ॥  
iti yatirājamahānasaparimaḷaparivāhavāsitāṃ pibata .  
vibudhapaṛiṣanniṣēvyāṃ vêdāntōdayanassampradāyasudhām ..

*"Let us imbibe the nectar of spiritual tradition which has come down to us through the 'Udayana of Vêdānta'- Kidāmbi Ācchan; emanating the fragrant aroma streaming forth from the kitchen of the Emperor among ascetics and fit to be enjoyed by the assembly of learned men."*

-Rahasya Traya Sāra, Chapter 32

And again in the Sharanāgati Deepika, Vêdānta Deśika refers to the spiritual kitchen of the Emperor among ascetics as the source of his teachings:

पद्मापतेः स्तुतिपदेन विपच्यमानम्  
पश्यन्त्विह प्रपदनप्रवणा महान्तः ।  
मद्वाक्यसंवलितं अप्यजहत् स्वभावम्  
मान्यं यतीश्वरमहानससंप्रदायम् ॥

padmāpatēḥ stutipadēna vipacyamānam  
paśyantviha prapadana pravanā mahāntaḥ .  
madvākyasaṁvalitaṁ apyajahat svabhāvam  
mānyaṁ yatīśvaramahānasasampradāyam ..

*"Let those great ones, devoted to the path of self-surrender,  
see this treatise on the highly venerable tradition of  
Yatishvara's kitchen, which retains its inherent nature  
despite being admixed with my words, and which is  
cooked as a hymn in praise of the Consort of Lakshmi!"*

-Sharanāgati Deepika, 1

Just as delicious delicacies are prepared in a royal kitchen and are offered to distinguished guests at a suitable time, in the royal kitchen of the Emperor among ascetics the enjoyable meanings of the Vêdā-Vêdānta were cooked fresh according to the instructions of Yatirāja, by the chief of the kitchen- Ācchan. Moreover, these delicious dishes have been preserved through the tradition of the kitchen of Yatirāja in such a manner that they never lose their inherent flavor. These recepies were given their inherent flavor by Yatirāja, and they were then passed on to deserving disciples with the same flavor and fragrance. Vêdānta Deśika here makes the analogy of cooking a dish in the form of the praise of Lord Śrīman Nārāyana, in accordance with the same recepies handed down in the tradition of the kitchen of Yatirāja. And this is to be enjoyed only by those who are firmly devoted to the doctrine of Prapatti. Such is the meaning!

The fact that Pranatārtihara or Kidāmbi Ācchan was extremely well versed in the Sampradāya of Rāmānuja is also indicated by the concluding words of Śrī Nanjīyar in his Śrī Sookta Bhāshya. Here he uses the term 'Sat-Sampradāya' to indicate the complete authority of the disciplinic succession of Kidāmbi Ācchan:

यतीन्द्रमाहानसिकात् प्रणतार्तिहरात् गुरोः ।  
सत्संप्रदायसिद्धोऽर्थः श्रीसूक्तस्य विनिश्चितः ॥

yatīndramāhānasikāt praṇatārtiharāt gurōḥ .  
satsampradāyasiddhōrthaḥ śrīsūktasya viniścitaḥ .

*“Śri Sūkta has thus been interpreted according to ‘correct tradition’, having been learnt from our Guru Pranatārtihara, the one in charge of the kitchen of Rāmānuja!”*

-Śri Sookta Bhāshya

The fact that Nanjīyar (also called Ranganātha Muni, Nārāyana Muni or Periya Jīyar) learnt the quintessential doctrinal truths pertaining to Goddess Śree directly from Kidāmbi Ācchan (Pranatārtihara) is also corroborated by the words of Śri Vēdānta Deśika in his work Rahasya Traya Sāra.

‘எம்பெருமானைச் சொன்னவிடத்திலே எங்கும்  
பிராட்டியையும் சொல்லிற்றாம்’  
என்று தொடங்கி உடையவர் அருளிச்செய்த  
வார்த்தையை ஆச்சான் பக்கலிலே  
கேட்டு நஞ்சீயர் ஸங்க்ரஹித்தார்

emperumāṇaic conṇaviṭattilē eṅkum pirāṭṭiyaiyum collirāṁ  
eṇṇu toṭaṅki uṭaiyavar aruḷicceyta vārttaiyai  
āccāṇ pakkalilē kēṭṭu nañciyār saṅkrahittār

*“Nanjeeyar heard from Kidāmbi Ācchan what  
Śri Bhāshyakāra had declared and summarized as follows-  
‘In places where Bhagavān is referred to, it is to be  
understood that Lakshmi is also referred to!’”*

-Rahasya Traya Sāra, Chapter 23

## Śri Vêdānta Deśika as Ubhaya Vedāntāchārya:

Śri Vêdānta Deśika occupies an important position in the further continuation of the doctrine of Rāmānuja. As detailed above, it was in him that three main Bhāshya lineages culminate. From Rāmānuja, through Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān, Engal Āļvān, Nadādur Ammāl and Kidāmbi Appullār; the tenets of the Śri Bhāshya and Gita Bhāshya came to Vêdānta Deśika. Into his hands also came the Śruta Prakāshika for protection. Therefore he became the most important Āchārya for the teaching of the Śri Bhāshya. Out of utmost respect for the work of Sudarshana Sūri, Vêdānta Deśika preserved the commentary for posterity. He composed a short work summarizing the main points of the Śri Bhāshya according to the Śruta Prakāshika and this was called Tattva Tika. He discoursed on the Śri Bhāshya numerous times. He also composed the Tātparya Chandrika - a detailed gloss on Gita Bhāshya of Rāmānuja.

From Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān, through Engal Āļvān, Nadādur Ammāl and Kidāmbi Appullār, the tenets of the Bhagavad Vishayam came to Vêdānta Deśika. By the grace of Nammālṽr, Vêdānta Deśika composed a detailed gloss on the Bhagavad Vishayam called 'Eļupatthu Nālāyirappadi' or 'Seventy Four Thousand Padi'. He performed the Kālakshepam of the Bhagavad Vishayam numerous times, according to this detailed gloss. He also composed works such as Munivāhana Bhogam, Madhurakavi Hrudayam, Upakāra Sangraham and others to bring out the essence of the Prabandhams. Vêdānta Deśika was also instrumental in restoring the Adhyayanotsavam at Śrirangam. He consecrated the Archā Vighrahas of the Āļvārs and defended their worship and adoration.

Due to their closeness to Rāmānuja, Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān and Kidāmbi Ācchan occupied special position as disciples. The duo was entrusted with the teaching of certain Rahasyas or doctrinal truths pertaining to the Mantras and also pertaining to Goddess

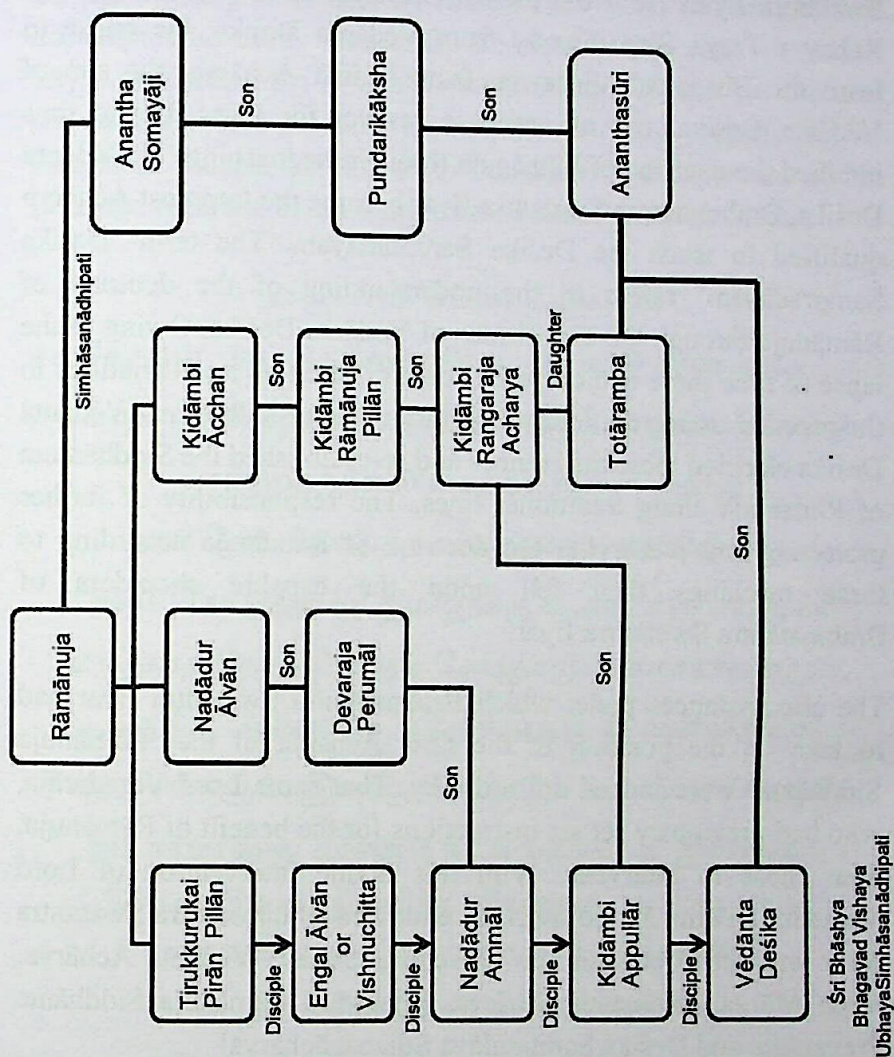
Śree. These secrets were then taught to Vêdânta Deśika by Appullār, who himself imbibed the teachings through the lineage of the Kidāmbi family. In order to bring out these esoteric truths, Vêdânta Deśika composed the Rahasya Traya Sara.

In essence, Vêdânta Deśika was the foremost Âchārya of the Rāmānuja Siddhānta having become equipped with thorough mastery over :

- 1) The Bhāshyas of Rāmānuja on the Vêdânta Sūtras, and Bhagavad Gita;
- 2) The Bhagavad Vishayam - Bhāshya of Pillān on the Tiruvaimoḷi, and
- 3) The Rahasyas pertaining to the Mantras.

Thus, through the grace of Nadādur Ammāl and Kidāmbi Appullār, he became an unparalleled Âchārya of Ubhaya Vêdânta!

Vêdânta Deśika performed the noble task of composing numerous works to clarify the subtle and fundamental concepts of Rāmānuja Siddhāntam. He placed the tenets of the doctrine of Rāmānuja on a firm footing by showing the relevant scriptural sanction. Deśika reconciled the same philosophy as previously taught by Rāmānuja. In honor of this noble deed, the doctrine of Rāmānuja, as re-established by Vêdânta Deśika, became called Deśika Sampradāyam!



## Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar as the Âchārya of Deśika Sampradāyam:

The foremost disciple of Vêdānta Deśika was Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar. He learnt the Śrī Bhāshya, Gita Bhāshya, and the Rahasya Traya Sāra directly from Vêdānta Deśika. He chose to learn the Bhagavad Vishayam from Nainār Âchārya, the son of Vêdānta Deśika, out of immense respect for him. Having thus imbibed the doctrine of Rāmānuja through the teachings of Vêdānta Deśika, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar became the foremost Âchārya qualified to teach the Deśika Sampradāyam. The term 'Deśika Sampradāyam' refers to the understanding of the doctrine of Rāmānuja through the expositions of Vêdānta Deśika. Owing to the lapse of time there had occurred some differences and variations in the practice among the followers of Rāmānuja Siddhāntam. Vêdānta Deśika clarified these differences and re-established the Siddhāntam of Rāmānuja along traditional lines. The responsibility of further protecting and preserving the doctrine of Rāmānuja according to these teachings then fell upon the capable shoulders of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar.

The circumstances under which Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar had to take up the position of the next Âchārya of the 'Rāmānuja Siddhānta' were indeed not ordinary. That same Lord Varadarāja, who had previously set six instructions for the benefit of Rāmānuja, now chose to intervene. With this divine intervention of Lord Varadarāja Perumāl, the specially endowed Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar was set to become the succeeding Ubhaya Vêdānta Âchārya, Veda Mārga Prathistapanāchārya, Bhagavad Rāmānuja Siddhānta Pravartaka and Deśika Sampradāya Sthapanāchārya!

**The Seventh Instruction of Varadarāja Perumāl:  
Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar appointed as the succeeding  
Rāmānuja Siddhānta Sampradāya Pravartaka**

On the evening of Friday, 29 March 1359 C.E., at Perumāl Koil Kānchipuram, Lord Varadarāja Perumāl along with Perundevi Tāyār proclaimed Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar to be the next principal Āchārya to carry forward the work of propagating the Rāmānuja Siddhānta. This divine mandate was expressed by the Lord and recorded by the temple accountant Perarulāla Priyan.

நாமும் நம் பெண்டுகளுடன்  
சடகோபன் பாட்டுக்கேளாநிற்க, நம் வீடு கருமம் கேட்கும்  
பெருமாஸ்தாதனும், நம் பட்டர்களும் சொல்லக்கேட்டு,  
ப்ரம்ஹதந்த்ர ஸ்வதந்த்ர ஜீயன் என்று  
நாம் பேர் கொடுத்த வைஷ்ணவ தாஸனுக்கு,  
நாம் கொடுத்தபடி இவனுக்கு உண்டான மடமும்,  
மடத்தை நோக்கி வரும் சேஷத்ரமும், சமாராதனமும்,  
அதுக்கு வேண்டும் முத்துக்களும், இவன் தேடின  
புத்தகங்களும், இதற்கு வேண்டும் உபகரணங்களும்,  
நம் ராமானுஜ தர்சனம் நடக்கைக்காக, இவனுக்கு  
பின்பும் இவன் நியமித்த இவனுடைய சிஷ்யர்கள்  
பரம்பரையாக இவற்றைக் கைக்கொண்டு  
நடத்திப்போடக்கடவர்கள் ஆகவும்.  
இவனை நம் ராமானுஜம் உடையாரும்,  
நம் சமயத்தில் உள்ளாரும் .  
கைக்கொண்டு நடத்திப்போடச் சொன்னோம்.

இச்செய்தியைக் கல்லிலும், செம்பிலும் வெட்டிக்  
கொள்ளும்படி இவனுக்கு நாம் முடித்தபடியும்,  
உடுத்தபடியும், பூசினபடியும் கொடுத்தோம்.

*Naamum Nam Pendugaludan  
Satakopan Paattu Kelaa nirka Nam Veedu Karumam Ketkum  
Perumālataatanum, Nam Bhattarkalum Solla-kketu,  
Brahma-Tantra-Swatantra Jiyan Enru  
Naam Per-kudduta Vaishnava daasanukku,  
Naam Kudutappadi Ivanukku Undaana Matamum,  
Mathattai Nokki Varum Kshetramum, Samaaraadanamum,  
Adduku Vendum Muttukkalum, Ivan Tedina  
Puthakangalum, Idukku Vendum Upakarangalum,  
Nam Rāmaanuja Darshanam Nadakkaik-kaaga Ivanukku  
Pinbum, Ivan Niyamitta Ivanudaya Sishyargal  
Paramparaiyaaga, Ivarrai Kaikkondu  
Nadattipoddakkadavargal Aagavum  
Ivanai Nam Rāmānujam Udaiyaarum  
Nam Samayattil Ullaarum  
Kaikondur Nadattippoda Chhonnom /  
Iccheydiyai Kallilum Shembilum  
Vettikollumbadi Ivanukku Naam  
Mudittapadiyum Uduttapadiyum Pusinapadiyum Kuduttom /*

*While listening to the songs of Satakopa  
along with Our consorts (Śrī and Bhu),  
on the representation made by Our Bhattas  
and by Perumāl Taatan*

*We are pleased to bestow the following  
upon a Vaishnavadāsa,  
to whom We had earlier given*

*the title of 'Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar',*

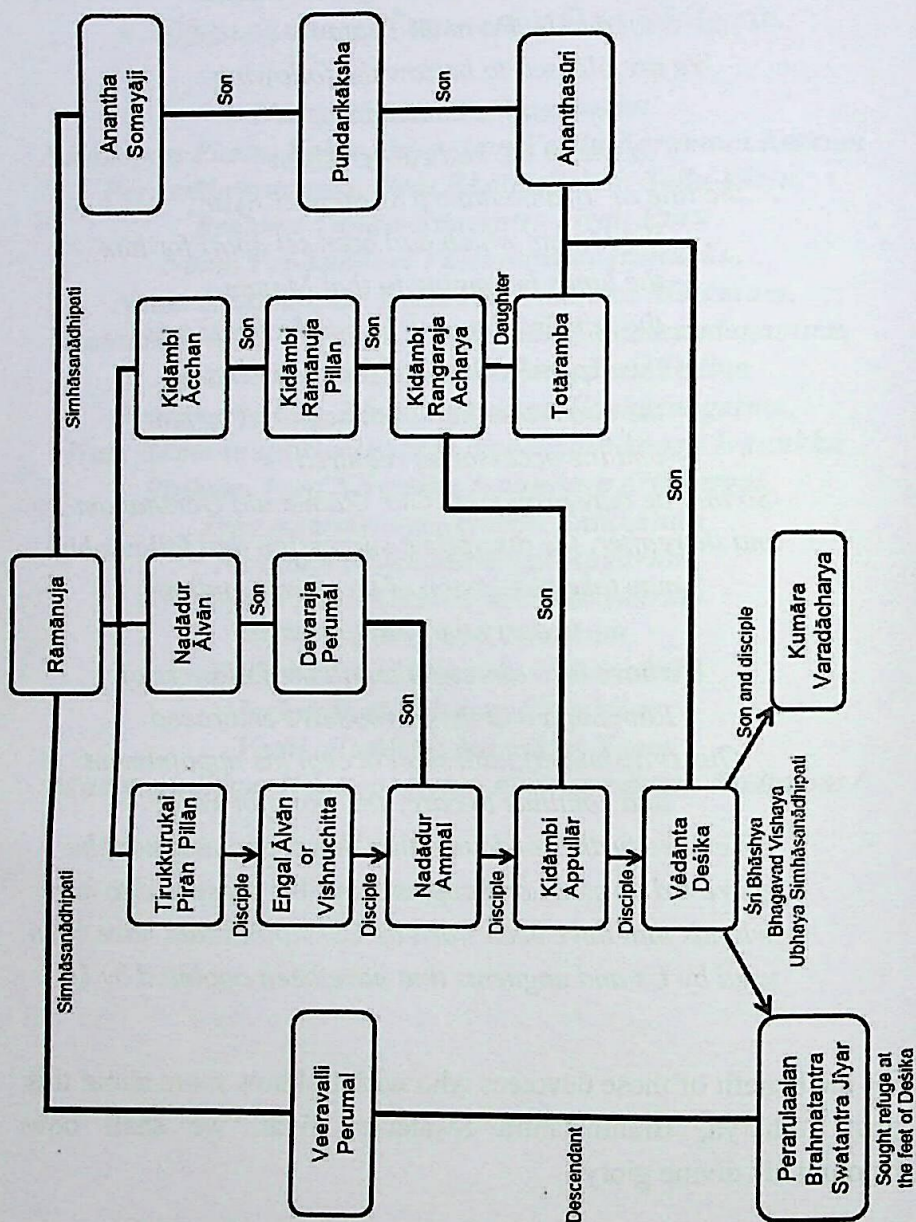
- the Matam which had been set apart for him*
- the lands belonging to that Matam*
- the Samārādhana to be conducted thereof*
- the expenses required for such worship*
- the books that had been acquired by him*
- and the accessories required*

*So that he may propagate Our 'Rāmānuja Darshanam';  
and thereafter, the disciplinic succession that follows him  
may take possession of these and continue  
to carry the work forward!*

*We have also directed that all the followers of  
Rāmānuja and those who have embraced  
Our (Vaishnava) faith shall accept his appointment  
and continue to carry the work forward!*

*We have further ordained that this pronouncement be  
engraved on stone and copper; and We presented to him  
garlands that have been worn by Us, clothes that have been  
used by Us and unguents that have been anointed by Us!*

For the benefit of those devotees who wish to know more about this great Âchārya, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, we shall now expound his divine glory!



श्रयामो वात्स्यवेदान्तरामानुजकृपास्पदम् ।

ब्रह्मतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रश्रीश्रीनिवासगुरुत्तमम् ॥

śrayāmō vātsyavēdāntarāmānujakṛpāspadam .

brahmatantrasvatantraśrīśrīnivāsagurūttamam ..

*"We surrender to the most excellent Guru Śrī Śrinivāsa  
Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi, who was the recepient of  
the grace of Śrī Vatsya Vêdānta Rāmānuja Swāmi!"*

तार्तीयिकब्रह्मतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रेण यतीन्दुना ।

गुरुपङ्क्तिप्रभावोयं सङ्ग्रहेण प्रकाशितः ॥

tārtīyīkabrahmatantrasvatantrēṇa yatīndunā .

gurupaṅktiprabhāvōyaṁ saṅgrahēṇa prakāśitaḥ ..

*"This work composed by the moon among ascetics, the  
third Brahmatantra Swatantra Yati, brings to light the  
Guruparampara Prabhāvam in the form of a summary!"*





## **The life of Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar**

**Tiru Avatāram of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar**

Year: Kali 4388, Vyaya, Shaka 1209

Solar Month: Purattāsi; also called Bhādrapada or Nabhasya

Asterism: Tiruvona

Sunday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1286 C.E

Gotra: Koundinya

Śrī Veeravalli Hastīsha, also called Śrī Veeravalli Perarulāla Aiyan, was born in the year 1286 C.E. in the lineage of the famed Veeravalli Perumāl family of Koundinya Gotra. Veeravalli Perumāl himself was one among the 74 Simhāsanādhipatis appointed by Rāmānuja.

Perarulāla Aiyan was conferred the Panchasamskāras by his father and was also taught the Vēdās with its various angās. The young Perarulāla Aiyan heard of the greatness of Vēdānta Deśika, who was well versed with the doctrine of Rāmānuja, and decided to seek his refuge.

A few years prior to this, Vēdānta Deśika had become an eminent Śree Vaishnava scholar at Kānchipuram. In accordance with the wishes of Nadādur Ammāl, Kidāmbi Appullār had taught the scriptures, the meaning of the esoteric mantras, the tenets of the doctrine of Rāmānuja along with the Śrī Bhāshya, Gita Bhāshya and other works, the inner sense of the Divya Prabandha according to the Bhagavad Vishayam, and other quintessential doctrinal points to his nephew Vēnkatanātha. Under his guidance, Vēnkatanātha also

became adept in the Vêdās, various Smritis, Purānās, Itihāsās and Âgamās. He also became a master of numerous other branches of learning including Jyotisha (astrology), Cchandās (poetic metrics), Shabda Shāstra (phonetics), Kaavya (poetry), Nātaka (dramatics) apart from being skilled in the understanding of the tenets of other philosophical schools such as Mimāmsa, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, Shaiva, Māyāvāda, Jaina, Bauddha and others. All this was accomplished even by the young age of twenty, as declared by Deśika himself!

विंशत्यब्दे विश्रुतनानाविधविद्या ।

viṁśatyabdē viśrutanānāvidhavidyā .

*“In the twentieth year, studies in various branches of learning had been completed.”*

-Sankalpa Suryodaya 1.15

So also declare other sources:

जटावर्णचर्चाद्यनेकप्रकारत्रयीलक्षणोच्चारणे व्यासकल्पः ।

तथा कल्पसूत्रप्रयोगाद्यभिज्ञो जयत्यन्वहं सर्वतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रः ॥

jaṭāvarṇacarcādyanēkaprakāratrayīlakṣaṇōccāraṇē vyāsakalpaḥ  
tathā kalpasūtraprayōgādyabhijñō jayatyanvahaṁ sarvatantrasvatantraḥ ..

*“Eternally victorious is this Sarva Tantra Swatantra who resembles Vyāsa himself in the knowledge of Vêdā and its various methods of recitation such as Jata, Varna, Carca and others; and who is conversant and skillful in the performance of rituals according to the Kalpa Sutras!”*

भरद्वाजशाण्डिल्यहारीतमुख्यस्मृतिस्तोमसूक्ष्मार्थनिर्णीतिदक्षः ।  
पुराणागमादिष्वसाधारणश्रीस्सुतो भाति लोकेष्वनन्तार्यसूरेः ॥

bharadvājaśāṇḍilyahārītamukhyasmṛtistōmasūkṣmārthanirṇītidakṣaḥ .  
purāṇāgamādiṣvasādhāraṇaśrīssutō bhāti lōkēṣvanantāryasūrēḥ ..

*"The son of Ananta Suri was adept in the interpretation of the subtle import of various Smritis composed by Bharadvāja, Shāṇḍilya, Hārīta and other such great sages; and had extraordinary mastery over the Purāṇas and Āgamās!"*

ज्योतिश्छन्दश्शब्दशास्त्रप्रवीणः काव्यश्रेणीनाटकालङ्कृतिज्ञः ।  
मीमांसायां ब्रह्मकर्मानुगायां स्रष्टा साक्षात्सर्वतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रः ॥

jyōtiśchandaśśabdaśāstrapravīṇaḥ kāvyāśrēṇīnāṭkālāṅkṛtijñāḥ .  
mīmāṃsāyāṁ brahmakarmānugāyāṁ sraṣṭā sāḁṣātsarvatantrasvatantraḥ

*"An expert in the field of astrology, prosody, and phonetics; well versed in poetry, dramatics; and verily like the creator of Brahma and Karma Mimāmsa, was this Sarva Tantra Swatantra!"*

साङ्ख्ये योगे भाट्टतन्त्रे गुरुक्ते शैवे जैने शाङ्करे भास्करे च ।  
शास्त्रे बौद्धे यादवे गर्वितानां प्रत्याख्याता सर्वतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रः ॥

sāṅkhyē yōgē bhāṭṭatantrē gurūktē śaivē jainē śāṅkarē bhāskarē ca .  
śāstrē bauddhē yādavē garvitānāṁ pratyākhyātā sarvatantrasvatantraḥ

*"This Sarva Tantra Swatantra was well capable of refuting and quelling the pride of the scholars of opposing doctrines such as Sāṅkhya, Yoga, the doctrine of Bhatta and Guru Prabhākara, the Shaivas, the Jainas, the Bauddhas, the followers of Shankara, of Bhaskara, of Yādava and others!"*

-Saptati Ratna Mālīka 26, 27, 28, 29

In the field of Vêdânta and its branches, Vêdânta Deśika therefore became 'Adviteeya', i.e. 'second to none' owing to the grace of his Âchārya and the blessings of Lord Hayagreeva!

Pleased with the progress of his disciple, an ailing Appullār initiated Vênkatanātha into the Vainatheyā Mantra. He also bestowed to Deśika the Shankā-Chakra murdas that had been obtained from Rāmānuja through the Kidāmbi lineage. Eventually Appullār left the mortal world and ascended to the Supreme abode. Vêdânta Deśika became deeply saddened by the loss of his Âchārya, however he continued to reside at Perumāl Koil for a few years performing Siddhānta Pravachanam there for the benefit of Śree Vaishnavās.

Having heard of the accomplishments of Vêdânta Deśika, Perarulāla Aiyan, who was about eighteen years younger, decided to seek refuge in him. Deśika was continuing the work of teaching and propagating the philosophy of Rāmānuja at Kanchi, a task that had previously been accomplished by his Prāchārya Śri Nadādur Ammāl. Having arrived there, Perarulāla Aiyan beheld the divine persona of Śri Vêdânta Deśika who appeared like an incarnation of Lord Vênkatêshwara Himself!

सशङ्खचक्र लाञ्छनस्सदूर्ध्वपुण्ड्रमण्डित-

स्सकण्ठलग्नसत्तुलस्यनर्घपद्ममालिकः ।

सितान्तरीय सूतरीययज्ञसूत्रशोभितो

ममाविरस्तु मानसे गुरुस्स वेङ्कटेश्वरः ॥

saśaṅkhacakra lāñchanassadūrdhvapunḍramanḍita

ssakaṇṭhalagnasattulasyanarghapadmamālikaḥ .

sītāntarīya sūttarīyayajñasūtraśōbhitō

mamāvirastu mānasē gurussa vēṅkaṭēśvaraḥ ..

*"May the divine appearance of the Guru Venkateshvara, who is adorned by the marks of the conch and discus, who sports the Urdhva Pundara, whose neck is decorated by the pure Tulasi and precious Lotus beads, who is embellished by a bright white Yagnopaveeta; ever reside in my heart!"*

-Saptati Ratna Mālīka 59

Just as Kūrat Ālvān of the Harita Gotra had come to seek guidance of Rāmānuja, here Perarulāla Aiyan came to seek Vêdānta Deśika as his Āchārya. Prostrating at the feet of Vedāntāchārya, Perarulāla Aiyan sought his refuge by composing and offering the following verse as a mark of respect and adoration;

नमः पदमिदं भूयात् तस्मै वेङ्कटसूरये ।

यद्वागमृतसेकेन सञ्जीवितं इदं जगत् ॥

namaḥ padamidaṁ bhūyāt tasmai vēṅkaṭasūrayē .

yadvāgamṛtasēkēna sañjīvitam idaṁ jagat ..

*"I bow again and again to the feet of this Vēnkata Sūri, the profuse drizzle of whose nectarine speech enlivened this mortal world!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Pleased by his humility and thirst for true knowledge, Śrī Vêdānta Deśika accepted Perarulāla Aiyan into his fold. Along with him, disciples such as Veeravalli Krishnamāchārya and others also became the disciples of Vêdānta Deśika.

The meeting of a Guru as great as Vêdānta Deśika with a disciple as capable as Perarulāla Aiyan set the stage for the immaculate tradition of Rāmānuja to be handed downwards in an unbroken fashion to the present day!

## Lord Hayagreeva appears to Vêdânta Deśika:

Following these major events, Deśika travelled to Tiruvahindrapuram and sat under an Ashwatta (fig) tree on the hill called Oushadagiri in the vicinity of the temple of Lord Narasimha. There, he meditated on Garuda with the profound and powerful Vainatheyā mantra taught by his Guru Appullār.

अङ्गेष्वाणन्द मुख्य श्रुतिशिखर मिळदण्डकं गण्डपूर्वं  
 प्रागेवाभ्यस्य षट्सु प्रतिदिशमनघं न्यस्त शुद्धास्त्र बन्धाः ।  
 पक्षि व्यत्यस्त पक्षि द्वितय मुख पुट प्रस्फुटोदार तारं  
 मन्त्रं गारुत्मतं तं हुतवह दयिता शेखरं शीलयामः ॥

aṅgēṣvānanda mukhyaśrutiśikharamiḷaddaṇḍakaṁ gaṇḍapūrvam  
 prāgēvābhyasya ṣaṭsu pratidiśamanaghaṁ nyasta śuddhāstra bandhāḥ  
 pakṣivyatyasta pakṣi dvitaya mukha puṭa prasphuṭōdāra tāraṁ  
 mantraṁ gārutmatam taṁ hutavaha dayitā śēkharaṁ śīlayāmaḥ .

*"Having first recited the Keelaka 'Ga' and 'Da', we then recite the Mantra along with the Pranava, which is verily the embodiment of Supreme Bliss and the main import of the summit of the Vêdās (Upanishads); we then recite the mantra in the dandaka form; perform the purification of the six portions of the body, and invoke a protective cage in all directions by means of the pure Astra Mantras; and meditate repeatedly on the exalted Mantra! The word 'Pakshi' or the reverse of the word Pakshi', enjoined with the Pranava either before or after, followed by the name of the wife of the fire deity- this constitutes the protective Mantra that invokes Garuda!"*

- Garuda Panchashat 1

Even as Nammālvār appeared to Nāthamuni, the great Garuda- the remover of suffering, manifested in front of Vēnkatanātha and bestowed upon him the nectarine Hayagreeva Mantra.

व्याख्या मुद्रां करसरसिजैः पुस्तकं शङ्खचक्रे  
बिभ्रद्भिन्नस्फटिकरुचिरे पुण्डरीके निषण्णः ।  
अम्लानश्रीरमृतविशदैरंशुभिः प्लावयन् मां  
आविर्भूयादनघ महिमा मानसे वागधीशः ॥

vyākhyā mudrām karasarasijaiḥ pustakaṁ śaṅkhacakrē  
bibhradbhinnasphaṭikarucirē puṇḍarīkē niṣaṇṇaḥ .  
amlānaśrīramṛtaviśadairamśubhiḥ plāvayan mām  
āvirbhūyādanagha mahimā mānasē vāgadhīśaḥ .

*"May the Lord of speech; who is of unblemished brilliant magnificence (owing to Goddess Śree seated on his left lap), who is seated on a lotus flower, sporting a teaching poise (Jnāna mudra), with His lotus hands holding the discus, conch and the manuscript, and shining brightly with the effulgence of a cleaved crystal; bathe me with a portion of His pure, clear, nectarine utterances and become manifest in my mind!"*

- Hayagreeva Stotra 32

Vēnkatanātha meditated on this form of Lord Hayagreeva, repeatedly reciting the sacred Hayagreeva Mantra. By the grace of Garuda, the very God of Gods- Lord Hayagreeva appeared in front of him! Vēnkatanātha prayed with reverence:

विशेषवित्पारिषदेषु नाथ विदग्ध गोष्ठीसमराङ्गणेषु ।  
जिगीषतो मे कवितार्किकेन्द्रान् जिह्वाग्र सिंहासनमभ्युपेयाः ॥  
viśeṣavitpāriṣadēṣu nātha vidagdhagōṣṭhīsamarāṅgaṇēṣu  
jigīṣatō mē kavitārkikēndrān jihvāgra siṃhāsanaṁabhyupēyāḥ .

*"In the assembly of eminent learned men and distinguished scholars, when I speak with a desire to become victorious over the best among poets and logicians, O Lord, do make my tongue thy throne and become seated!"*

-Hayagreeva Stotra 28

Lord Hayagreeva offered to Deśika a portion of His nectarine saliva, and blessed him to become the great upholder of the doctrine of Rāmānuja! Being overjoyed and considering himself blessed, Vēkatanātha composed the Hayagreeva Stotra and the Garuda Dandakam at Tiruvahindrapuram. For a short while, he went to Śrirangam and resided there performing Siddhānta Pravachanam.

**Anga Panchaka Sampanna Atma Raksha Bhāra Samarpanam at Perumāl Koil:**

Vēkatanātha then undertook an extensive tour to visit the Divya Kshetras spread along the length and breadth of the entire country. Having witnessed various glories of the Lord at different places, he came back to Perumāl Koil at Kānchipuram and performed Anga Panchaka Atma Raksha Bharanyāsa at the feet of his most beloved Lord, Varadarāja Perumāl!

संसारावर्त वेग प्रशमन शुभदृग्देशिक प्रेक्षितोऽहं  
संत्यक्तोऽन्यैरुपायैरनुचित चरितेष्वद्य शान्ताभिसन्धिः ।  
निःशङ्कस्तत्त्वदृष्ट्या निरवधिकदयं प्रार्थ्य संरक्षकं त्वां  
न्यस्य त्वत्पादपद्मे वरद निजभरं निर्भरो निर्भयोऽस्मि ॥

saṁsārāvarta vēga praśamana śubhadṛgdēśika prēkṣitōham  
santyaktōnyairupāyairanucitacaritēśvadya śāntābhisandhiḥ .  
niḥśaṅkastattvadṛṣṭyā niravadhikadayaṁ prārthya saṁrakṣakaṁ tvāṁ  
nyasya tvatpādapadmē varada nijabharaṁ nirbharō nirbhayōsmi ..

*"Having become the object of the gracious glances  
of my Āchārya which are capable of quelling  
the whirlpool of material existence, giving up my  
tendencies to pursue improper paths, abandoning  
all other means, with the mind free from doubts,  
beholding only the Supreme truth, and desiring  
Your infinite grace, I seek You alone as my true  
protector, O Varada! I have now entrusted  
the burden of my deliverance at Your lotus feet!  
Being relieved of that burden, I am now fearless!"*

-Nyāsa Vimshati 22

Pleased with the prayer of Vêdānta Deśika, the Lord bestowed the Tirtha Prasādam and Tulasi to him. Through the agency of the priest, Lord Attigiri Perumāl conveyed to Deśika that his prayer has been accepted without any doubt whatsoever, and that he may therefore remain happy forever! Having been blessed by Lord Varada in this manner, Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika continued to reside in his 'Tirumāligai' (residence) at Tirutanka (Thooppul) near the shrine of 'Vilakkoli Perumāl'.

**Archā Vighraha of Lakshmi Hayagreeva comes to Vêdānta Deśika:**

Shubhakrit Samvatsara; Kali 4404 (Current)

Month: Purattāsi

Nakshatra: Tiruvonam / Shravana

Year: 1302 C.E.

Place: Perumāl Koil, Kānchipuram

About 200 years prior to the occurrence of these events, the great Rāmānujāchārya had undertaken a journey to various parts of the country in order to establish his doctrine. He finally reached the famed Saraswathi Peetam at Kashmir. In that ancient temple, Rāmānuja was welcomed by Goddess Saraswathi with due honors. Pleased with the blemishless exposition of the Sutras of Vyāsa, its

lucid rendition which reconciled the seemingly contradictory portions of the Vēdānta and its complete fidelity to the true import of the Vēdānta, Goddess Saraswathi honored the work by placing the manuscript upon her head and by bestowing the title of 'Śrī Bhāshya' for the immaculate gloss! She gave Rāmānuja the title of 'Śrī Bhāshyakāra'! She also blessed Rāmānuja with an Archā Vighraha of Lakshmi Hayagreeva which was previously worshipped by Chaturmukha Brahma and given to her!

तद्भाष्यमादाय निधाय मूर्ध्नि श्रीभाष्यमेतद्वरभाष्यकृत्त्वम् ।

इतीव तस्मै प्रददौ च देवी भाष्यं हयग्रीवमपिस्वदेवम् ॥

tadbhāṣyamādāya nidhāya mūrdhni śrībhāṣyamētaḍvarabhāṣyakṛttvam .

itīva tasmai pradadau ca dēvī bhāṣyaṃ hayagrīvamapisvadēvam ..

*"Taking that Bhāshya and placing it on her head,  
Goddess Saraswathi said 'You are the author  
of an excellent Bhāshya, which is to be called  
Sri Bhāshya!'. Saying thus, the Goddess gave  
him the Bāshya and also presented him with  
the deity of Lord Hayagreeva worshipped by her!"*

-Yatirāja Vaibhavam 88

This Archā Vighraha of Lakshmi Hayagreeva was worshipped by Rāmānuja for many years along with his personal deity of Lord Varada which he received from his ancestors. The deity of Lord Hayagreeva was then handed over to Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān by Rāmānuja himself before leaving the mortal world.

प्राचीनाराधनं तं वरदमपि हयग्रीवमाप्तं च वाण्याः

दत्त्वा ज्ञानात्मजाय त्रिभुवनतिलकीभूतकीर्तिर्यतीशः ॥

prācīnārāḍhanam taṃ varadamapi hayagrīvamāptaṃ ca vāṇyāḥ

datvā jñānātmajāya tribhuvanatilakībhūtakīrtiryatīśaḥ ..

*"Yatisha, who verily became an ornament of the three worlds, bestowed upon his spiritual-son (Pillān) the deity of Lord Hayagreeva which he had received from Goddess Saraswathi, along with the personal deity of Lord Varada worshipped from ancient times!"*

-Yatirāja Vaibhavam 112

Thus, in the familial lineage of Pillān, the Archā Vighraha continued to receive unbroken daily worship and appropriate offerings. Fourth in the familial succession following the great Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān was Pundarikāksha, who was named after his (the latter's) grandfather. This Pundarikāksha lived during the time of Vêdānta Deśika and was performing the daily unbroken worship of the Lakshmi Hayagreeva Archā handed down to him in familial succession. King Krishna Raaya\* who ruled over Vada Naadu (Northern territory) was the disciple and follower of this Pundarikāksha.

Pundarikāksha was married to the daughter of Kidāmbi Appullār, the maternal uncle of Vêdānta Deśika. In the Kali year 4404 (C.E 1302), cyclic year of Shubakrit, in the solar month of Purattāsi, under the Asterism of Tiruvonam, Pundarikāksha and his wife were blessed with a son. At that time, Pundarikāksha was presiding over the royal assembly of the kingdom of Krishna Raaya in Vada Naadu. He heard of the good news of the birth of his son and rejoiced!

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\*This king Krishna Raaya may be identified with Krishna, the ruler of Warangal who succeeded the Kakatiya King Prataapa Rudra II.

Vêdânta Deśika visited the house of Pundarikāksha and blessed the latter's son by naming the child as 'Śrinivasan'. Deśika also blessed the child with the 'Thiruvilachinnai'. That night, Lord Hayagreeva appeared in the dream of Pundarikāksha and directed him to hand over the Archā Vighraha of Lakshmi Hayagreeva, worshipped previously by Śrī Bhāshyakāra (which had then come to Pundarikāksha through the familial lineage of Pillān), to Vêdânta Deśika. The next morning, Pundarikāksha narrated these events to King Krishna Raya. Pleased with this, the King made immediate arrangements to send Pundarikāksha to Perumāl Koil.

Celebrating the birth of his son, Pundarikāksha arrived at Perumāl Koil to seek the blessings of Devarāja Perumāl. Here, he was received with due honors. He then beheld Vêdânta Deśika coming along his path and bowed to him. He narrated his dream, much to the astonishment of Deśika. Vêdânta Deśika then accepted with utmost humility the Archā Vighraha of Lakshmi Hayagreeva, previously worshipped by Rāmānuja himself.

The compassionate Lord Hayagreeva, who had manifested to Deśika earlier, now came to him in the form of an Archā Vighraha. That too, this Archā Vighraha of Lakshmi Hayagreeva was none other than the one previously gifted to Âchārya Rāmānuja by Goddess Saraswathi at Saraswathi Peetam. Deśika therefore considered himself blessed by the overflowing compassion of Rāmānuja! Thereon, the duty of daily worship of Lord Lakshmi Hayagreeva came to the deserving hands of Vêdânta Deśika. Swāmi Deśika remarked:

ब्रह्माद्यासकलादेवा यं न स्मर्तुमपीश्वरः ।

स एष भगवान् अद्य मां तारयितुमागतः ॥

brahmādyā sakalādēvāḥ yaṁ na smartumapīśvaraḥ

sa ēṣa bhagavān adya māṁ tārayitumāgataḥ ..

*"That Supreme Lord who cannot be realized by  
even Brahma and such other Gods, that very  
Primal Lord Himself has come today to protect me!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Beholding the magnificent Divya Mangala Vighraha of Śrī Lakshmi Hayagreeva, Vêdānta Deśika performed a Vishêsha Aradhanam (special worship) with the rendering of the Hayagreeva Stotra!

ज्ञानानन्दमयं देवं निर्मलस्फटिकाकृतिम् ।

आधारं सर्वविद्यानां हयग्रीवमुपास्महे ॥

jñānānandamayam dēvaṃ nirmalasphaṭikākṛtim .

ādhāraṃ sarvavidyānām hayagrīvamupāsmahē ..

*"We meditate on Lord Hayagreeva, who is replete with Supreme  
knowledge and bliss, who is radiant like a unblemished crystal,  
and who is verily the source of all branches of learning!"*

-Hayagreeva Stotra 1

**Tiru Avatāram of Kumāra Varadāchārya**

Year: Kali 4418, Nala, Shaka 1239

Solar Month: Aavani

Asterism: Rohini

Wednesday, 11 August, 1316 C.E.

Gotra: Vishwamitra

Place: Kānchipuram

In the 4418 Kali year of Nala, the month of Aavani, under the asterism of Rohini, Lord Varadarāja Himself took birth as the son of Vêdānta Deśika. According to the instructions of the Lord expressed in a dream, Deśika named his son 'Varadāchārya'. Vêdānta Deśika in due course performed the necessary Samskārās such as Aksharārambha, Brahmopadesha, Panchasamsakāra, and

Vedāramba. He also blessed his son with the Tirumantra and Mantrartha Rahasyas.

Being much younger to Perarulāla Aiyan, Kumāra Varadāchārya became his junior co-disciple under the tutelage of Vêdānta Deśika. This glorious assemblage of the great Âchārya Deśika and his eminent disciples earned the admiration and blessings of the scholar Sudarshana Sūri, who was at that time residing at Śrīrangam. Vêdānta Deśika along with Perarulāla Aiyan, Varadāchārya and many other disciples now verily seemed like Yatirāja and his numerous close disciples.

प्रबुद्धतामरसामविलोचनं प्रसिद्धशिष्यजनैः परिवारितम् ।

प्रबुद्धरागतमं गुरुपादयोः प्रबुद्धचेतसमर्थसमर्थने ॥

prabuddhatāmarasānavilōcanam prasiddhaśiṣyajanaiḥ parivāritam .  
prabuddharāgatamaṁ gurupādayōḥ prabuddhacētasamarthasamarthanē ..

*"With eyes resembling freshly bloomed lotuses;  
heart replete with abounding affection for the  
lotus feet of preceptors; mind endowed with  
profound intellect and adeptness in interpretation of  
scriptural concepts; Vêdānta Deśika remains surrounded  
by an entourage of eminent and renowned disciples!"*

- Saptati Ratna Mālīka, 63

### Debate at Śrīrangam:

At Śrīrangam, certain Kudrishtis (people with deviant views, i.e. those of opposing doctrines) once arrived and challenged the validity of the doctrine of Rāmānuja. They sought a debate with the most eminent Śree Vaishnava scholars, failing which they demanded that everybody accept their doctrine. The Śree Vaishnava scholars of Śrīrangam went immediately to meet Sudarshana Sūri, the authority on the Śrī Bhāshya. Having met Sudarshana Bhattar, they narrated to him the details of the proposed challenge.

Sudarshana Bhattar at once recommended that Deśika, who had been blessed with the knowledge of the doctrinal truths through the disciplinic lineage of Ammāl, be sent to represent the school of Rāmānuja on their behalf.

Śrī Sudarshana Bhattar knew of Nadādur Ammāl's benediction upon Vêdānta Deśika- the benediction that Deśika would become the future upholder of the Rāmānuja Siddhānta! This was an opportunity for Vêdānta Deśika to defend the doctrine of Rāmānuja. For this reason, Śrī Sudarshana Bhattar recommended that Vêdānta Deśika be invited from Perumāl Koil for the debate.

At that very time, Deśika received through agency of the priests at Śrirangam, a divine mandate from Vishwaksena- the chief commander of the Lord of Arangam. The divine mandate read thus:

श्रीमद्श्रीरङ्गनाथस्य विश्वक्सेनस्य शासनम् ।

तद्भक्तभक्तानां शिरोभूषणाद् गतम् ॥

śrīmadśrīraṅganāthasya viśvaksēnasya śāsanam .

tadbhaktabhaktānāṃ śirōbhūṣaṇād gatam ..

*"The divine commandment of Śrī Ranganātha  
and Śrī Vishwaksena, now becomes the head-ornament  
of the devotees of the devotees of theirs!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

श्रीरङ्गेन्द्रोः शासनं सूरिवर्यैः यस्मै शीघ्रं प्रेषितं वादिरोधे ।

तस्मै भक्तिं कुर्वते ये नरास्तान् धन्यान् सेवे संस्तुवे चिन्तयामि ॥

śrīraṅgēndōḥ śāsanam sūrivaryaiḥ yasmai śīghraṃ prēṣitam vādirōdhē .

tasmai bhaktiṃ kurvātē yē narāstān dhanyān sēvē saṁstuvē cintayāmi .

*"I revere, serve and meditate upon those people who are devoted to the Guru, to whom the divine commandment of the Lord of Śrīrangam was speedily sent by the wise men, so that he may defeat the opponents!"*

- Vêdānta Deśika Vaibhava Prakāshika; 42

Deśika, at once, set forth to Śrīrangam, having worshipped Varadarāja Perumāl and Perundevi Tāyār at Perumāl Koil. There, he bathed in the Tirukkāveri and entered the corridors of the great temple of Lord Ranganātha along with his disciples headed by Sri Perarulāla Aiyan. He was welcomed with the offerings of garlands and with the melody of auspicious musical instruments. He circumambulated the shrine, bowed to the Archā of Rāmānuja, prayed to the Guruparampara and then arrived at the shrine of Ranganāyaki Tāyār. Here, he received the blessings of Goddess Ranganāyaki who said "May you accomplish the noble task of re-establishing the doctrine of Rāmānuja!" Bowing then to Lord Periya Perumāl Ranganātha, Deśika accepted Tirtha-Prasadam. Through the agency of the priest Lord Ranganātha blessed Deśika saying "Like our Rāmānuja, may you be the one who upholds our doctrine!" Blessed thus by the divine couple, Deśika entered the Tiru Mantapam, the venue for the debate. The great debate between the Kurdishtis and Vêdānta Deśika took place for seven consecutive days!

Every evening, Perarulāla Aiyan recorded onto a palm leaf the arguments put forth by Deśika. On the eighth day, the Kudrishtis conceded defeat, not being able to counter the strong arguments of Deśika in defense of the system of Rāmānuja. Deśika countered the opposing doctrines by pointing out their flaws through one hundred 'Vādams' or arguments, backed by sound proof from Vêdānta texts. The doctrine of Rāmānuja had gloriously been re-established on an

unshakeable pedestal. Vêdânta Deśika had performed a deed befitting his position as Rāmānuja Siddhānta Pravartaka!

Those hundred statements became recorded in the form of a 'Pattolai' (manuscript on palm leaves) by Perarulāla Aiyān who witnessed the great debate as it unfolded. This documented was then examined by Vêdânta Deśika. Having blessed it, he then composed it into a work called it 'Shatadushani', i.e. 'a hundred faults' (i.e. one hundred statements rejecting the false doctrine).

श्रीभाष्यं विरचय्य संयमिवरो जित्वा स्वयं वादिनो  
बाह्यांश्चापि कृदृष्टिकान् भुवि पुनर्भाष्यप्रतिष्ठाशया ।  
श्रीमद्वेङ्कटनाथदेशिकशिरोरत्नात्मनाऽऽविर्बभौ  
इत्येवं च वदन्ति हन्त ! कृतिनस्त्रैकालिकज्ञानिनः ॥

śrībhāṣyaṁ viracayya saṁyamivarō jitvā svayaṁ vādinō  
bāhyāṁścāpi kṛdṛṣṭikān bhuvi punarbhāṣyapraṭiṣṭhāśayā .  
śrīmadvēṅkaṭanāthadēśikaśirōratnātmanā āvirbabhau  
ityēvaṁ ca vadanti hanta kṛtinastraikālikajñāninaḥ ..

*"The wise ones who know the past, present and future  
aver thus- 'Yatirāja, the best among ascetics, by  
composing the Śrī Bhāṣhyam won over the disputants  
from opposing schools and defeated the Kudrishtis!  
In order to re-establish the Śrī Bhāṣhya, Rāmānuja  
himself took birth again upon this earth  
as the crown-jewel Śrīmad Vêdânta Deśika'!"*

-Saptati Ratna Mālīka, Verse 12

The holy city of Śrīrangam rejoiced upon hearing the victory of Deśika. Several Śree Vaishnavās resorted to the feet of Deśika as disciples. Through the agency of the priest, the Lord of Arangam ordained that Vêdânta Deśika reside at Śrīrangam and continue the

noble deed of Siddhānta Pravachanam. Śrī Sudarshana Bhattar requested Vêdānta Deśika to fulfill the wish of the Lord. Vêdānta Deśika, pleased with the blessings showered upon him, continued to reside at Śrīrangam.

### **Siddhānta Pravachanam:**

One night, Rāmānuja appeared in the dream of Vêdānta Deśika and commanded him to discourse on the Śrī Bhāshya, Bhagavad Vishayam, Tirumantra and the Mantrārthas for the benefit of Śree Vaishnavās at Śrīrangam, and to compose works on these doctrinal tenets for the sake of posterity. Deśika then carried out these ordained tasks with much enthusiasm!

Pleased with these achievements of Deśika and satisfied with the lucid and flawless exposition on the dual Vêdānta - Śrī Bhāshya and Bhagavad Vishayam, the Lord of Arangam Periya Perumāl blessed Vêdānta Deśika and offered 'Arulappād Samarpanam' through the agency of the priest. Lord Ranganātha then bestowed upon Vêdānta Deśika, His own unique title of 'Vedāntāchārya'; 'the preceptor of Vêdānta'.

Śrī Ranganāyaki Tāyār, overjoyed with the manner in which Vêdānta Deśika elucidated the doctrine of Rāmānuja, and having heard the blessing of Periya Perumāl, showered Her overflowing grace upon him bestowing him with the title 'Sarva Tantra Swatantra'; 'Master of all arts'!

During his stay in Śrīrangam, on the auspicious day of Tiru Âdirai of Chittirai month, the Śree Vaishnavās there requested Deśika to compose a hymn in praise of Rāmānuja. Vêdānta Deśika complied with this request and praised Yatirāja in a composite of seventy verses, thus rendering the 'Yatirāja Saptati' in front of the Divya Mangala Vighraha of Rāmānuja. Following this, he returned to Perumāl Koil at Kānchipuram, and continued teaching his disciples while serving his beloved Lord Varada.

## Composition of works on Rāmānuja Siddhāntam:

During this time, Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika composed several works in Sanskrit on Rāmānuja Siddhāntam. Amongst numerous other works, he composed the 'Tatparya Chandrika'- a detailed gloss on the Gita Bhāshya; and an abridged work called 'Tattva Tika' explaining the tenets of the Śrī Bhāshya according to the Śrūta Prakāshika. He also composed the Rahasya Rakshai and other works on Rahasyas in Manipravala, thereby elucidating the quintessential doctrinal secrets about Goddess Śree and other such important doctrinal topics.

Śrī Sudarshana Bhattar and other senior Śree Vaishnavas of Śrīrangam, pleased with the skill of Vêdānta Deśika in composing numerous works to re-establish of the Matham of Rāmānuja, and his skill in the art of composing poems or metrical verses, blessed him with the title 'Kavitārkika Simhar'; 'lion among poets and logicians'!

On one occasion, Śrī Periya Vācchān Pillai\* was engaged in interpreting the subject matter of 'Nyāsa Vidya'. He called upon Vêdānta Deśika and asked him to comment upon the gist of Nyāsa Vidya. Swāmi Deśika composed the Nyāsa Vimsati along with a gloss and the Nyāsa Tilakam and submitted them to him for review. Śrī Periya Vācchān Pillai reviewed the work, blessed it and appreciated the scholarship of Deśika. However, he enquired if certain concepts presented therein could possibly contradict the explanation given by the Âḷvārs. Vêdānta Deśika quoted then the

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\* Swāmi Periya Vācchān Pillai, also known as Śrī Krishna Soori, was the elder contemporary of Vêdānta Deśika. According to the Periya Tirumudi Adaivu, he was born to Yāmuna Deśikar and Nāchīyār Amma, at the village of Śenganallur, in the year 'Sarvajith' (which may be calculated to current Kali 4329, current Shaka 1150), in the month of Simha-Aavani under the asterism of Rohini, on the glorious day of Bahula Ashtami (he was therefore named Krishna). This date corresponds to Friday, August 6, 1227 C.E. Swāmi Deśika had immense regard for him and for his works.

relevant passages of the various prabandhams of the Âļvārs, including the Tiruppāvai, which impress upon the import of the Charama Śloka. He showed that the final message of these passages was that Nyāsa or Sharanāgathi was mandatory act for attainment of Moksha. By referring to the practice of previous Âchāryas, he further validated his stand. Pleased by this explanation, Śri Periya Vācchān Pillai Swāmi remarked that Vēdānta Deśika was indeed the recipient of the abounding grace of Udayavar!

### **The honors bestowed upon Vēnkatanātha:**

With these events unfolding, Vēnkatanātha was now blessed with three honorary titles- Lord Periya Perumāl bestowed the title of '*Vedāntāchārya*'; Śri Ranganāyaki Tāyār blessed him with the title of '*Sarva Tantra Swatantra*'; and Śri Sudarshana Bhattar along with other senior Śri Vaishnavas honored him with the title '*Kavitārkika Simhar*'. Such was the greatness of our Vēnkatanātha!

Vēdānta Deśika had attained mastery over both- Vēdānta and Divya Prabandhās; and was adept in the Śri Bhāshya and the Bhagavad Vishayam. Therefore the title of '*Vedāntāchārya*', bestowed by Lord Ranganātha, in reality was an '*Ubhaya Vedāntāchārya Pada*' (the preceptor of the dual Vēdānta)!

Vēdānta Deśika had also attained total command over all arts. He had such a firm grasp over all arts, so much so that all the skills were completely under his control. Moreover, he would never demonstrate his expertise in any subject unless it was absolutely required. Such was the divine nature of the '*Sarva Tantra Swatantra*', Śri Vēdānta Deśika!

विश्वस्मिन् नामरूपाण्यनुविहितवता तेन देवेन दत्तां  
वेदान्ताचार्यसंज्ञामविहितबहुवित्सार्थमन्वर्थयामि ॥

viśvasmin nāmarūpāṇyanuvihitavatā tēna dēvēna dattāṃ  
vêdântācāryasañjñāmahitabāhuvitsārthamanvarthayāmi ..

*"That Supreme Lord who created the entirety of forms in this universe and gave names to all things, gave me the appellation of 'Vedântāchārya'; and here is an attempt of mine to make that very title apt and meaningful by composing this work! May the well learnt scholars of all doctrines take cognisance!"*

-Quoted by Vêdānta Deśika himself in Adhikarana Sārāvali, 1

वेदान्तदेशिकपदे विनिवेश्य बालं  
देवो दयाशतकमेतदवादयन्माम् ।  
वैहारिकेण विधिना समये गृहीतं  
वीणाविशेषमिव वेङ्कटशैलनाथः ॥  
vêdântadêśikapadē vinivêśya bālaṃ  
dēvō dayāśatakamētadavādayanmām .  
vaihārikēṇa vidhinā samayē grāhitaṃ  
vīṇāviśêṣamiva vênkaṭaśailanāthaḥ ..

*"Even as one adept in music, takes up a Veena at the right moment of enjoyment, and makes the instrument play melodiously; so too, the Lord of Vênkatasaila, has placed this child (me) on the pedestal of 'Vedântāchārya' (the preceptor of Vêdānta), and has made me (the instrument) recite this Daya Shatakam!"*

-Quoted by Vêdānta Deśika himself in Daya Shatakam, 104

कविकथकसिंह इत्थं त्रय्यन्ताचार्य इत्याभिख्यातः ।  
व्यावृणुत यामुन विहितां रमास्तुतिं वेङ्कटेश्वरकविः ॥  
kavikathakasiṃha itthaṃ trayyantācārya ityābhikhyātaḥ .  
vyāvṛṇuta yāmuna vihitāṃ ramāstutiṃ vênkaṭêśvarakaviḥ ..

*"This gloss on Yāmuna's 'Ramā Stuti' is herein composed by Vēnkateshvara Kavi, who has also been bestowed with the appellations of 'Kavitārṅkika Simha' and 'Vedāntāchārya'!"*

- Quoted by Vêdānta Deśika himself in his Chatussloki Bhāshyam

सर्वतन्त्र स्वतन्त्राय सिंहाय कविवादिनाम् ।  
वेदांताचार्य वर्याय वेङ्कटेशाय मंगळम् ॥  
sarvatantra svatantrāya simhāya kavivādinām .  
vêdāntācārya varyāya vēṅkaṭēśāya maṅgaḷam ..

*"Benedictions to the excellent one named Vēnkatesha, who was bestowed with the honors 'Kavitārṅkika Simha', 'Sarva Tantra Swatantra' and 'Vedāntāchārya'!"*

- Vêdānta Deśika Mangalam, 1

वेदान्तदेशिकपदं यस्मै श्रीरङ्गशायिना ।  
दत्तं तस्मै नमस्कुर्मो वेङ्कटेशविपश्चिते ॥  
vêdāntadēśikapadaṁ yasmai śrīraṅgaśāyinā .  
dattaṁ tasmai namaskurmō vēṅkaṭēśavipaścitē ..

*"I worship the learned Vēnkatesha, who was given the title of 'Vêdānta Deśika' verily by the Lord who reposes at Śrīrangam!"*

-Saptati Ratna Mālika, 4

इह रङ्गपतिप्रसादलब्धोभयवेदान्तधुरन्धरत्वकीर्तिः ।  
अपि तत्सहधर्मिणीकृपात्ताखिलतन्त्रप्रभुताक एष सूरिः ॥

iha raṅgapatiprasādalabdhōbhayavēdāntadhurandharatvakīrtiḥ .  
api tatsahadharminīkṛpāttākhilatantraprabhutāka ēṣa sūriḥ ..

*“This wise Guru was bestowed the glorious title  
‘Ubhaya Vēdānta Deśika’ by the grace of  
Lord Ranganātha! So too, he was blessed with  
the title ‘Sarva Tantra Swatantra’ by the  
compassion of the Lord’s consort Lakshmi!”*

-Saptati Ratna Mālīka; 31

### Judge in a debate:

Around this time, there occurred a great debate between Śrī Akshobya Muni- the disciple of Madhvāchārya and Śrī Vidyaranya- the great Advaitin scholar. This historic debate is said to have been held at Mulbagal, in Karnataka. The topic that was being debated upon was the purport of the Chandogya Upanishad Mahavākya ‘Tat Tvam Asi’. The King who was witnessing this great debate sent a letter to Śrī Vēdānta Deśika requesting him to go through the arguments put forth by both participants and to arbitrate. Being a profound scholar himself, Vēdānta Deśika was a fair judge for a debate of this nature, pertaining to the Mahavākya of the Vēdānta text. Having looked at all the arguments put forth by both scholars, Vēdānta Deśika finally ruled in favor of the views of Śrī Akshobya Muni. This he did by composing the following verse and sending it back to the king:

असिना तत्त्वमसिना परजीवप्रभेदिना ।  
विद्यारण्यमहारण्यमक्षोभ्यमुनिरच्छिनत् ॥  
asinā tattvamasinā parajīvaprabhēdinā .  
vidyāraṇyamahāraṇyamakṣōbhya muniracchinat ..

*"With the sword of Tat-tvam-asi, which shows the difference between Para (Supreme Self) and Jiva (Self), Akshobya Muni cut through the dense forest-like arguments of Vidyaranya and defeated him!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

तत्त्वमसिना असिना तं विद्यारण्यं मुनिः तदऽक्षोभ्यश्च ।

अच्छिनदित्यवदद्यः तं सेवे तत्त्वनिर्णये चतुरम् ॥

tattvamasinā asinā taṁ vidyāraṇyaṁ muniḥ tadakṣōbhyaśca .

acchinadityavadadyaḥ taṁ sēvē tattvanirṇayē caturam ..

*"I worship the wise one who, being adept at judging the true inner sense of the Vêdānta, ruled that Akshobya Muni had destroyed the arguments of Vidyaranya by weilding the sword of Tat-tvam-asi!"*

- Vêdānta Deśika Vaibhava Prakāshika; 78

### **Praise by Krishna Mishra and Dindima Kavi:**

Around this time, Krishna Mishra- a great scholar heard of the defeat of Advaita and about the greatness of Vêdānta Deśika. Coming to know of the honorary titles- 'Vedāntāchārya', 'Sarva Tantra Swatantra' and 'Kavitārka Simha' bestowed upon Deśika, Krishna Mishra himself came to engage in a debate. This debate went on for three days and Deśika emerged victorious! Krishna Mishra accepted his defeat and became an admirer of Vêdānta Deśika.

Krishna Mishra had composed a work called 'Prabodha Chandrodaya' for the benefit of those who were interested in Kavya (poetry) and not philosophy- the idea was to teach philosophy, by means of an allegory, to those who fancied another subject. He offered this work to Vêdānta Deśika for review. That night, without even going through the Prabodha Chandrodaya, Vêdānta Deśika

composed a work on similar lines to bring out the essence of the doctrine of Rāmānuja. He called it Sankalpa Suryodaya!

Krishna Mishra was astounded to see that a work of the nature of Sankalpa Suryodaya had been composed in one night! Śrī Sudarshana Bhattar and other senior scholars heard of this event and appreciated both works- Prabodha Chandrodaya and Sankalpa Suryodaya! Noting the profundity in the work Sankalpa Suryodaya and much astonished by the fact that the work had been composed in the time span of a single night, that too without even going through the Prabodha Chandrodaya, Śrī Sudarshana Bhattar and other scholars came to the conclusion that this was possible only due to the 'Avatāra Vishêsha' of Vêdānta Deśika! The work also portrayed the mastery of Vêdānta Deśika over Vêdānta, poetry, drama, language, literature and various such other fields. Śrī Sudarshana Bhattar therefore proclaimed that the title of 'Kavitārkika Simha' was indeed 'Anvartham'; or 'befitting to' Vêdānta Deśika!

Dindima Kavi\*, another scholar, heard of the defeat of Krishna Mishra in the debate and decided to test the skill of Vêdānta Deśika. Having composed a work called 'Rāmābhyudayam', Dindima Kavi sent it to Vêdānta Deśika for review. Deśika, having gone through the work, composed two works along similar lines- 'Yadavābhyudayam' and 'Hamsa Sandesham', and sent them to Dindima Kavi.

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\*The identity of Dindima Kavi: The 'Dindima' poets are family of illustrious poets who migrated from the North a long time ago and settled in the South Indian village of Mullandram, also called Praudadevarayapuram, in North Arcot district of Tamil Nadu. There were several of these poets who gained eminence during the period when the Vijayanagar empire flourished. Because every member of the family went by the title of 'Dindima', and because many members of the family carried repetitive names, it becomes difficult to discern who exactly is the one referred to by the Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam.

It is clear from the Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam that the Dindima Kavi in question was the author of the work called

Dindima Kavi however was overcome by pride. Without going through the works, the haughty poet composed the following two verses and sent them to Swāmi Deśika.

छित्वासर्वाण्यरण्यान्यतिविषमलतागुल्मदुर्गाणि सद्यः  
प्राप्तं मां पक्कणान्तं बत भषकततिर्बुक्कणैर्धक्करोति ।  
लज्जन्ते हन्तुमेनां मदकरटिघटाकुम्भपीठीविपाट-  
क्रीडाधौरेयधारा मम खलु नखराः किं करोमि क्व यामि ॥

chitvāsarvāṇyaraṇyānyativiṣamalatāgulmadurgāṇi sadyaḥ  
prāptaṁ mām pakkaṇāntaṁ bata bhaṣakatatirbukkaṇairdhikkarōti .  
lajjantē hantumēnām madakaraṭighaṭākumbhapīṭhīvipāṭa-  
krīḍādhaurēyadhārā mama khalu nakharāḥ kiṁ karōmi kva yāmi ..

*"Having severed numerous creepers, trees and bushes of the very dense forests, I have just arrived at the hut of an outcaste where a group of barking dogs are mocking me! These sharp, weapon-like, curved nails of mine, which are capable of harnessing a group of intoxicated elephants exuding the flow of juice from their temples, are shying away from killing these dogs! What shall I do? where shall I go?"\*\**

Rāmābhyudayam. Previously this poem Rāmābhyudayam has been wrongly attributed to a different author, however careful review of its colophon (as noted in Canto V of the records available at the Government Oriental Manuscript Library, Madras) indicates the true author of the work- Sonādrinātha, also called Dindima Kavi Sārvabhauma, the son of Abhirāma and Rājanātha. The colophon being:

शोणाद्रीन्द्रं कवीन्द्रं श्रवणकटुरटडिडण्डिमं सार्वभौमं  
प्रासूताम्बाभिरामा नवनवकविताभाजनं राजनाथात् ।  
तस्यैतस्मिन्नयातिक्रमविषयमहानाटकस्याग्रजाते  
काव्ये सर्गो निसर्गोज्वलरसविलसत्पञ्चमोऽयं जगाम ॥  
śōṇādrīndraṁ kavīndraṁ śravaṇakaṭuraṭaḍḍiṇḍimaṁ sārvaabhaumaṁ  
prāsūtāmbābhirāmā navanavakavitābhājanaṁ rājanāthāt .  
tasyaitasminnayātikramaviṣayamahānāṭakasyāgrajātē  
kāvyē sargō nisargōjvalarasavilasatpañcamō'yaṁ jagāma ..

When powerful elephants that can destroy a thick forest by its sheer might arrive at a village, the dogs bark at these mighty animals. The elephant, despite its might, does not care to counter the mocking challenge of such dogs. A lion, being more powerful than the elephant, can very much control a whole group of such mighty elephants in rut, with its weapon-like sharp claws, as if it were mere sport. When the elephants themselves do not respond to the taunt of the barking dogs, should the more powerful lion then care to respond to the mere bark of dogs? Not so, said Dindima Kavi. Comparing himself to a lion among poets he subtly suggested that he deserved the title of 'Kavitārkika Simha'!

Another traditional Sanskrit work called Vibhāgaratnamalika (also available at the Government Oriental Manuscript Library, Madras) gives further details of this Sonādrinātha. It fixes his date of birth as expired Kali year 4400 (see below verse), which is equivalent to the year 1299 C.E. (cyclic year of Vikārin). This makes Dindima Kavi a younger contemporary of Vēdānta Deśika (Dindima Kavi was thirty years younger). Assuming that the exchange between Dindima Kavi and Deśika occurred prior to the plunder of Śrirangam, we can surmise that Dindima Kavi was probably aged around 35 -37 years, while Deśika was aged around 65 - 67 years when the above event occurred.

चतुस्सहस्रेषु चतुश्शतेषु गतेषु वर्षेषु कलैर्युगस्य ।  
शुभे महूर्ते सति जातमात्रे सपुत्रके शोणधराभिधाने ॥

catussahasrēṣu catuśśatēṣu gatēṣu varṣēṣu kalēryugasya .

śubhē mahūrtē sati jātāmātrē saputrakē śōṇadhābhidhānē ..

The work Vibhāgaratnamalika also gives several other important details. Sonādrinātha or Arunagirinātha gained immense fame at a young age itself. He befriended the Hoysala king Praudadevaraya or Ballala III (all this must have definitely happened prior to 1342 C.E. as previously hypothesised, for we have inscriptions which record the death of Ballal III in that year). After this, it is said that in the kingdom of Suratrāna, he vanquished the court poet 'Kavimalla' who was also known by the name of 'Anapāya'. With this victory, Arunagirinātha became known as 'Dindima Kavi', for wherever he went his fame was proclaimed by the beat of the dindima drums!

प्रचण्डतरकाहलघण्टाडिण्डिमादिरचितबिरुदघोषेण ।

pracaṇḍatarakāhalaghaṇṭāḍiṇḍimādiracitabirudaghoṣēṇa

प्राज्ञानामेव राज्ञां सदसि न सहते जल्पमल्पेतरेषां  
क्षुद्रेष्वाक्षेपमुद्रां न खलु गणयते डिण्डिमः सार्वभौमः ।  
भांकुर्वद्भेककुक्षिभरिषु भयभरभ्रान्तभोगीन्द्रसुभ्रू  
भ्रूणभ्रंशी किमम्भः फणिषु पतगराट् संभ्रमी बंभ्रमीति ॥

prājñānāmēva rājñām sadasi na sahatē jalpamalpētarēṣām  
kṣudrēṣvākṣēpamudrām na khalu gaṇayatē ḍiṇḍimaḥ sārvaabhaumaḥ .  
bhāṅkurvadbhēkakukṣimbhariṣu bhayabharabhraṅtabhōgīndrasubhrū  
bhrūṇabhramṣī kimambhaḥ phaṇiṣu patagarāṭ sambhramī bambhramīti ..

*"Although unable to bear the mere chatter of the so called wise people even in the courts of great knowledgeable kings, this Dindima Kavi does not consider showing even the slightest hint of reproach as being worthy! The great Garuda bird which is capable killing great serpents and thereby causing terror among the she-serpents, will such a powerful bird even care to mind small water snakes that prey on frogs which are constantly croaking?"\*\**

Following this event, Dindima Kavi married Yagnāmbika. The work Vibhāgaratnamalika gives further proof of Dindima Kavi being contemporaneous with Deśika - it refers to Dindima Kavi being favored by King Bukka due to the intervention of Vidyananya, who we know was the good friend of Vēdānta Deśika.

विद्यारण्यदयारसार्द्रवपुषा विश्वार्थविश्राणिना ।  
विष्णुब्रह्मशिवालयान्नचयता श्रीबुक्कभूपात्मना ॥

vidyāraṇyadayārasārdravapuṣā viśvārthaviśrāṇinā .  
viṣṇubrahmaśivālayānnacayatā śrībukkabhūpātmanā ..

This Dindima Kavi was an expert in the art of 'Chitra Kavita'. Chitra Kāvya involves the skillful use of words in a specific arrangement and the repetitious use of syllables (alliteration). This special arrangement and re-arrangement of words evokes varied meanings, sometimes when taken in a specific context, or when read in reverse order, or when understood in the light of the pun implied etc. It is this art of Chitra Kāvya that Dindima Kavi employs in his exchange of words with Vēdānta Deśika!

Dindima Kavi went on further to suggest that his expertise in composing poems was so great that responding to the challenge of ordinary poets was an act similar to a great Garuda bird going after a small water snake when it can devour dangerous serpents! In conveying this information to Vêdânta Deśika, Dindima Kavi had also composed two terse verses using the art of Chitra Kavita and thereby also demonstrated his unique skill.

Swāmi Deśika, who considered praise as poison, was never a person who aspired for titles and honors. In fact, it was this humility that made him unique, and prompted renowned scholars to honor him! At the same time, Vêdânta Deśika was an uncompromising critic when it came to those who opposed the doctrine of Rāmānuja, or those who spoke ill of the followers of the doctrine of Rāmānuja. In this situation, he was provoked by the ostentacious display of a prideful poet who was trying to defame those very people who had bestowed the title of ‘Kavitārka Simha’ on Deśika. It is for this reason that he chose to respond.

Our Swāmi Deśika was indeed a master of all arts, and this incident further highlights his enormous capacity as a poet. Deśika sent a fitting reply to Dindima Kavi in two equally terse verses. He said,

स्पर्धन्तां सहजं नु कुञ्जरतया दिक्कुञ्जरैः कुञ्जराः  
 ग्राम्या वा वनवासिनो मदजलप्रस्विन्नगण्डस्थलाः ।  
 हा कालस्य विपर्ययं शृणु सखे प्राचीनपालीमला-  
 स्वादस्निग्धकपोलभित्तिरधमः कोलोऽपि संस्पर्धते ॥

spardhantām sahajaṁ nu kuñjaratayā dikkuñjaraiḥ kuñjarāḥ  
 grāmyā vā vanavāsinō madajalaprasvinnagaṇḍasthalāḥ .  
 hā kālasya viparyayaṁ śṛṇu sakhē prācīnapālīmālā-  
 svādasnigdhakapōlabhittiradhamāḥ kōlōpi saṁspardhatē ..

*"It is indeed natural that elephants, with the flow of juice  
 exuding from their temples, may compete with other*

*pre-eminent elephants of the eight directions, or even  
with those that reside in the village or in the forest!  
Alas, listen to the calamity of time my friend! A fat pig  
which has rolled in a ditch of old, foul smelling filth and  
has thereby developed a thick viscid flow along its temples,  
even such a hog now tries to compete with the elephant! ”\*\**

बाह्यैर्वर्णाडम्बरैर्माभ्रमन्तु च्छित्वा गर्भाभ्यन्तरं शोधयन्तु ।  
निर्णेतारो नीरसत्वेन को वा डिण्डीराणां डिण्डिमानां च भेदः ॥  
bāhyairvarṇāḍambarairmā bhramantu cchitvā garbhābhyantaram śōdhayantu .  
nirṇētārō nīrasatvēna kō vā ḍiṇḍīrāṇām ḍiṇḍimānām ca bhēdah ..

*“Do not be fooled by the exterior noise of words, rather it is  
necessary to cut and examine the very interior for the purpose  
of ascertainment! How can a person judging superficially  
ever tell the difference between ‘Dindima’ and ‘Dindeera’? ”\*\**

Swāmi Deśika quelled the pride of Dindima Kavi by sending his reply through these satirical lines. By a very clever use of puns and by a play of words, he sent a counter reply to the arguments put forth by Dindima Kavi in an equally skillful manner. Moreover, he punned upon the sound of the word ‘dindima’ by comparing it to the word ‘dindeera’. Although both sound similar, they have very different meanings. Dindeera means ‘sea froth’, while Dindima means ‘kettle drum’. The mere sound of words does not speak of their substance. While the verses of Dindima Kavi sounded complicated superficially, they had no substance in them. They were completely refuted by Swāmi Deśika’s reply.

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\*\*These four verses are not included in the 1911 Edition of the Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam. They have been quoted by Pandit V. Krishnamacharya in his introduction to ‘Sankalpa Suryodaya of Vēkatanātha’; The Adyar Library, Madras 1948

Shocked by the scholarly reply sent to him, Dindima Kavi realized Deśika's true greatness. He then read the 'Yadavābhyudayam' and 'Hamsa Sandesham' in great detail and much appreciated the brilliance of Swāmi Deśika. Overcome with remorse upon his actions, Dindima Kavi remarked that Vêdānta Deśika was indeed 'Kavitārkika Simha'. He then composed the following excellent verse in praise of Vêdānta Deśika.

द्विचतुष्पदपरिवर्तनगर्वितकरिशरभगण्डभेरुण्डः ।

खण्डनखण्डनकविरिह डिण्डिमकविगण्डडिण्डिमो जयतु ॥

dvicatuṣpadaparivartanagarvitakariśarabhagaṇḍabhēruṇḍaḥ .

khaṇḍanakhaṇḍanakaviriha ḍiṇḍimakavigaṇḍaḍiṇḍimō jayatu

*"Victory to (Vêdānta Deśika) the most excellent kettle-drum or 'Ganda-Dindima', the poet who verily defeated the opposing poet, even as a Ganda Berunda can easily overcome the puffed up pride of an elephant transformed into an eight legged Sharabha!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

The implication here is that Vêdānta Deśika was verily a Ganda Berunda for Śarabha like poets who are puffed up with arrogance. There is a lot of 'Artha Slesha' or paragrams used in this verse. While comparing the literary skill of poets, comparisons are often drawn to the strength of powerful animals. Elephants are considered strong animals, but a lion is considered much more powerful. A Sharabha is said to be a mighty animal which is stronger than the lion. The Ganda Berunda- a two headed bird, however, is said to exceed every other animal in might for it can easily devour even the Sharabha!

'Dvichatushpada' stands for eight legs – an elephant is transformed to a Sharabha with eight legs and therefore becomes puffed up with

pride. Dvichatuspada also stands for two 'Chatuspada' or verses of four lines each. Dindima Kavi having composed two terse verses challenging Deśika had become puffed up with pride. A Sharabha is however no match for the most powerful Ganda Berunda whose might far exceeds that of elephants, lions and Sharabhas. Dindima Kavi therefore compared himself to a Sharabha and Swāmi Deśika to the Ganda Berunda.

Dindima Kavi also puns upon the word 'dindima'. Dindima stands for a 'war-drum' or 'kettle drum'. While the greatness of Dindima Kavi was often announced by such kettle drums, he gave Vêdānta Deśika the title of 'Ganda-dindima' or the 'most excellent kettle drum' whose resounding note is eternally victorious!

जित्वा कविं डिण्डिमसार्वभौमं कृत्वा च कृष्णाभ्युदयं मनोज्ञम् ।

स्तुतस्तदा तेन गुरुत्तमो यः तमाश्रये सर्वकलास्वतन्त्रम् ॥

jitvā kavim ḍiṇḍimasārvabhaumaṁ kṛtvā ca kṛṣṇābhyudayaṁ manōjñam .  
stutastadā tēna gurūttamō yaḥ tamāśrayē sarvakalāsvatantram ..

*"I surrender to best among preceptors – Śri Sarva Tantra Swatantra, who won over Dindima Sārvabhauma by composing the beautiful Krishnābhyudayaṁ and thereafter received commendation from him!"*

- Vêdānta Deśika Vaibhava Prakāshika; 78

### Worship of the Archā Vighraha of Lakshmi Hayagreeva:

On one occasion, while Deśika was travelling with his disciples through the forests at Tirukkovilur, he happened to stay at the house of a Vaishya Śree Vaishnava. Deśika performed the Tiruvārāadhanam of the Hayagreeva Archā with mere water; having nothing else to offer to the Lord. He himself fasted and went to sleep, meditating on the feet of the Lord. That night, the Vaishya merchant woke up hearing a strange noise. To his astonishment, he

saw a marvelous white horse eating from the sacks of gram stored in his granary. Thinking that the horse belonged to Deśika, the Vaishya merchant woke him up, requesting him to tie up his horse so that it may not eat up all the food. Pleased by the blessed vision of the attractive white horse, Deśika at once requested the Vaishya to bring him some milk offerings. The milk brought by the Vaishya was offered to the Archā Vighraha of Lord Hayagreeva. Deśika and his disciples then partook the remaining portion and assured the Vaishya that the horse would not return. The merchant considered himself blessed with the opportunity of offering milk to Lord Hayagreeva. Next morning, the Vaishya arranged for a grand Tiruvārādhnam to be performed to that Archā of Lakshmi Hayagreeva.

समर्पितं तेन पयो विशुद्धं निवेद्य देवाय हयाननाय ।

ततः स्वयं स्वीकृतवान् गुरुर्यः तदाङ्घ्र्युपाया वयमेव धन्याः ॥

samarpitam tēna payō viśuddham nivēdya dēvāya hayānanāya .  
tataḥ svayaṁ svīkṛtavān gururyaḥ tadāṅghryupāyā vayamēva dhanyāḥ ..

*"Blessed are we who have sought the feet of that Guru,  
who gave the horse faced Lord the offerings of  
pure milk and himself partook the remaining!"*

- Vêdānta Deśika Vaibhava Prakāshika; 90

### Perarulāla Aiyan accepts Sannyāsa:

Perarulāla Aiyan continued studying the Vêdānta, Itihāsa, Purānās and the angās of Vêdā under the guidance of Śrī Deśika. During the course of his studies, the strong devotion to Lord Vishnu that had arisen in his heart made Perarulāla Aiyan dispassionate and averse to the pleasures of mundane life. He decided to take to the fourth order of life, like Yatirāja, so that he may continue to work towards the propagation of the Vêdānta doctrine of Rāmānuja. With

dispassion in his mind and devotion to Lord Hari in the core of his heart, he bathed in the holy waters of the Pushkarini. Vêdânta Deśika had already bestowed upon his disciple the necessary 'Presha Mantra' for accepting the ascetic order. Donning the saffron robes, Perarulāla Aiyan bowed to Lord Varadarāja and Perundevi Tāyār and accepted Sannyāsa. Swāmi Vêdânta Deśika gave him the name '*Perarulāla Jīyar*' or '*Haṣṭhinātha Yogeesha*'. With the triple staff in his hand, sporting the twelve Urdhva Pundaras, sporting a tuft of hair on his head and decked in the saffron robes, the Vaishnava Yati Perarulāla Jīyar shone verily as though the great Rāmānuja himself had returned to earth!

The junior disciples of Deśika, having witnessed this glorious event, composed the following verse in honor of Perarulāla Aiyan:

हस्तीशं लोकविख्यातं कौण्डिन्यां विदुषां वरम् ।

रामानुजार्यसिद्धान्तस्थापनाचार्यमाश्रये ॥

haṣṭīśaṃ lōkavikhyātaṃ kauṇḍinyāṃ viduṣāṃ varam .

rāmānujāryasiddhāntasthāpanācāryamāśrayē ..

*"We seek refuge in the well known Śrī Haṣṭīshaṛ of the Koundinya Gotra, the best among wise men, the Āchārya who firmly established the doctrine of Rāmānuja!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

At this time, two other disciples of Vêdânta Deśika who were rooted in dispassion also decided to accept the fourth order of life-Sannyāsāshrama. Veeravalli Krishnamāchārya donned the Ochre robes and became 'Vennai Kūtha Jīyar' and Komandur Appai became 'Prabhakara Jīyar'!

Perarulāla Jīyar, Vennai Kūtha Jīyar and Prabhakara Jīyar were the three Yativarya disciples of Vêdânta Deśika!

## Vêdānta Deśika writes an elaborate gloss on the Bhagavad Vishayam:

At around this time, Vêdānta Deśika also accomplished another important feat. By the grace of Nammāļvār, Deśika took up this task of furthering the message contained in the divine works of the Āļvārs by composing works that bring out their essence. He wrote a detailed gloss on the Tiru Ārāyiarappadi of Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān, based on the doctrinal truths taught to him by his Guru Kidāmbi Appullār. This monumental work consisted of seventy four thousand Padi's and was called 'Eļupatthu Nālāyirappadi'. He had also composed 'Munivāhana Bhogam', 'Madhurakavi Hrudayam'; 'Dramidopanishad Sāram' and 'Dramidopanishad Tatparya Ratnavali' among the many works dealing with the hymns of the Āļvārs.

सरोभूतवेतालसारस्वतानां शठद्विट्कलिध्वंसिमुख्योदितानाम् ।  
अविच्छिन्नसत्संप्रदायार्थवेदी गुरुर्वेङ्कटेशो गुरुक्तिष्वतुल्यः ॥

sarōbhūtavētālasārasvatānām śaṭhadviṭkalidhvaṃsimukhyōditānām .  
avicchinnaśatsampradāyārthavēdī gururvēṅkaṭēśō gurūktiṣvātulyaḥ .

*"Śri Guru Vēnkatesha is the unparalleled Guru who imbibed the true inner meanings of the words of Poigai, Bhūtam, Pey, Satakopa, Tirumangai and other Āļvārs by means of an un-interrupted Sat-Sampradāyam!"*

-Saptati Ratna Mālīka; 24

ग्रन्थैश्चतुस्सप्ततिभिः सहस्रैः चतुस्सहस्रार्थविशेषयुक्तैः ।  
यः षट्सहस्रस्य चकार वृत्तिम् तं देशिकं नौमि शतं सहस्रम् ॥

granthaiścatussaptatibhiḥ sahasraiḥ catussahasrārthaviśēṣayuktaiḥ .  
yaḥ ṣaṭsahasrasya cakāra vṛttim taṃ dēśikaṃ naumi śataṃ sahasram .

*"I bow hundreds of thousand times to that Deśika who composed the work called Seventy four thousand, which is a gloss on the six-thousand, comprising of the quintessential truths of the four-thousand!"*

-Vêdânta Deśika Vaibhava Prakāshika; 117

### Śri Bhāshya Pravachanam:

Year: Kali 4430, Vibhava

Solar Month: Chittirai

Asterism: Punarvasu

Paksha: Shukla

Saturday, April 16, 1328 C.E.

Place: Perumāl Koil, Kānchipuram

Śri Vêdânta Deśika, having been taught the Śri Bhāshya through the Bhāshya Simhāsana lineages of Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān, Engal Ālvān, Nadādur Ammāl and Kidāmbi Appullār; had discoursed on the text of the Śri Bhāshya numerous times, and had taught his foremost disciples the same tenets. At Perumāl Koil, Kānchipuram, in the (current) Kali year of 4430, Chittirai month, under the asterism of Punarvasu, Kumāra Varadāchārya learnt the Śri Bhāshya at the feet of Vêdânta Deśika. Varadāchārya commenced by first reciting the laudatory verse on Vêdânta Deśika composed earlier by Perarulāla Jīyar:

नमः पदमिदं भूयात् तस्मै वेङ्कटसूरये ।

यद्वागमृतसेकेन सज्जीवितं इदं जगत् ॥

namaḥ padamidaṁ bhūyāt tasmai vēṅkaṭasūrayē .

yadvāgamṛtasēkēna sañjīvitam idaṁ jagat ..

*"I bow again and again to the feet of this Vēṅkata Sūri, the profuse drizzle of whose nectarine speech enlivened this mortal world!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

This verse had previously been composed by Perarulāla Jīyar while surrendering to the feet of Vêdānta Deśika, and had also been recited by the former prior to performing the Śrī Bhāshya Pravachanam. Along the same lines, Kumāra Varadāchārya himself composed and recited the following laudatory verse in gratitude to his father and Guru:

श्रीमान् वेङ्कटनाथार्यः कवितार्किककेसरी ।

वेदान्ताचार्यवर्यो मे संनिधत्तां सदा हृदि ॥

śrīmān vēṅkaṭanāthāryaḥ kavitārkikakēsarī .

vêdāntācāryavaryō mē sannidhattām sadā hṛdi ..

*“ May Vēṅkatanātha, the venerable one, the lion among poets and logicians, the preceptor of Vêdānta, ever reside in my heart ”*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

After the rendition of the two verses, the elucidation of the Śrī Bhāshya according to the Śruta Prakāshika was undertaken. The date for the combined rendering of these two verses is therefore given as Saturday, April 16, 1328 C.E.

Śrī Sudarshana Bhattar, hearing of the manner in which the Śrī Bhāshya Pravachanam was commenced with the rendering of the two laudatory verses in praise of Vêdānta Deśika, became much pleased! He commended this noble act and ordered the recitation of the two verses prior to any study of the Śrī Bhāshya undertaken henceforth. Vêdānta Deśika considered this to be the result of the limitless compassion of his beloved Lord Varadarāja!

### The move to Satyakālam:

On one occasion, Kandādai Lakshmanāchārya, a great Śrī Vaishnava scholar, happened to pass by along with his disciples in front of Vêdānta Deśika's house at Śrīrangam. Deśika, fully

immersed in his analysis of scriptural texts along with his disciples, failed to acknowledge the brief presence of Kandā dai Lakshmanāchārya. Outraged at this disrespect shown to their preceptor, the disciples of Kandā dai Lakshmanāchārya asked Deśika to immediately come out of his house. At once, Deśika bowed to Kandā dai Lakshmanāchārya, apologizing for the mistake he had committed unknowingly.

Following this incident, Vēdānta Deśika left his residence along with his family, Perarulāla Jīyar and other disciples, to travel towards the forest of Satyakālam. He settled down there to serve Lord Varadarāja at a temple along the banks of Tirukkāveri and peacefully spent a few years in contemplation upon the Lord and also delivering discourses to his disciples.

Kandā dai Lakshmanāchārya, whose disciples had behaved unfavorably towards Vēdānta Deśika, then happened to fall ill and was unable to beget an offspring. Recalling the harsh treatment meted out to a great devotee such as Deśika, the wife of Kandā dai Lakshmanāchārya bade him to proceed to Satyakālam and seek forgiveness from Deśika. Heeding to the good advice, Kandā dai Lakshmanāchārya arrived at Satyakālam with his wife and apologized to Vēdānta Deśika. Being the noble person he was, Deśika at once pardoned the misdeeds of Lakshmanāchārya's disciples. Lakshmanāchārya lived in the forests of Satyakālam along with Deśika's family for some time. He served Vēdānta Deśika and accepted his Śrīpāda Tirtham, following which he was cured of his illness. Deśika then advised the couple to reside at Tirunārāyanapuram for some time. Lakshmanāchārya and his wife were then blessed by Lord TiruNārāyana to have a son, who was named 'Tirtha Pillai' in honor of Deśika and his Śrīpāda Tirtham.

### **The title of 'Brahmatantra Swatantra'**

Swāmi Deśika then developed intense desire to behold the magnificent Lord of Arangam. Having instructed his wife and son

Varadārya to remain at Satyakālam, Swāmi Deśika set off with a few of his disciples towards the city of Śrīrangam. Here, Deśika and his disciples were welcomed with due respects. Having prayed to the Lord and His consort, Deśika decided to remain there for some time along with his disciples.

Around this time, several Advaitin scholars came to Kānchipuram from the northern parts of the country and challenged the system of Rāmānuja, trying to malign the doctrine propounded by him. Vēdānta Deśika commissioned his senior most and closest disciple, Perarulāla Jīyar to proceed to Kanchi and to represent him in the debate. Perarulāla Jīyar accepted the command of his Āchārya and prepared for the challenging task. When Perarulāla Jīyar reached Kānchipuram, he proceeded to the 'Tirumāligai' (residence) of his Āchārya Vēdānta Deśika and circumambulated the sacred site. Bowing to the feet of his Āchārya enshrined within the core of his heart, he then hastened to Perumāl Koil. Having bowed to Lord Varada and Perundevi Tāyār at Perumāl Koil, he was now prepared to meet the opponents in debate. Within the precincts of the great temple, a Mandapa (hall) had been set up for the conduct of the debate. With a divine glow emanating from his attractive countenance, Perarulāla Jīyar ascended into the hall where many people had assembled to witness the debate!

The Advaitin scholar challenged the Jīyar with multiple arguments. The chief subject of his contention was the tenets of the doctrine of Rāmānuja. With ease, Perarulāla Jīyar was able to point out the flaws and ambiguity in the views of the opponent. Moreover, the misconstrued understanding of essential aspects of the Vēdānta by the Advaitin scholar was made explicit by the Jīyar. This was done rather easily by the Jīyar owing to his profound knowledge of the Vēdānta. He also countered the deviant views of the Advaitin scholar with help of the lucid arguments that Vēdānta Deśika had earlier put forth in the Shatadushani. He profusely quoted scriptural evidence and other texts from the Vēdānta to support his views.

This debate lasted three nights, at the culmination of which Perarulāla Jīyar emerged victorious! He had discernibly distinguished himself in the eyes of the erudite audience that had gathered there. The system of Rāmānuja had once again been defended!

With a sense of contentment that he had discharged his duty towards his revered Âchārya, Perarulāla Jīyar hastily repaired to the sanctum of Perundevi Tāyār and then to the main sanctum of Lord Devarāja Perumāl. Lord Varada was extremely pleased with the victory of Perarulāla Jīyar. The Lord also marveled at the erudition and scholarly brilliance shown by Perarulāla Jīyar with regard to the Vêdānta Sutra and its Śrī Bhāshya. Even as the Lord bestowed compassionate looks on Perarulāla Jīyar, with a smiling countenance, He spoke through the agency of the priest announcing '*Arulappād! Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar!*' The Tirtha, Shatāri and Prasāda were offered to the Jīyar with due honors. With the permission of the Lord, the Jīyar returned to Śrīrangam to join his Âchārya.

Having heard the manner in which Perarulāla Jīyar put forth his arguments to win over the opponents, and noting his stupendous mastery over the doctrinal aspects of the Śrī Bhāshya, Deśika rejoiced. Prompted by the blessing of Lord Varada, Vêdānta Deśika proudly bestowed upon his disciple the title of 'Brahmatantra Swatantra' meaning, 'an authority on the Vêdānta'! While Goddess Śree had bestowed upon Deśika the title of 'Sarva Tantra Swatantra', his disciple now became 'Brahmatantra Swatantra'! Sudarshana Bhattar was overjoyed on hearing about the incident, and this reminded him of the glory of Rāmānuja and his closest disciple Kūresha.

काञ्च्यां ततः कञ्चन कोशमत्तं मतं यतीशस्य च दूषयन्तम् ।

यो ब्रह्मतन्त्रे चतुरो जयत्तं तादृक्षशिष्यं गुरुमानतोस्मि ॥

kāñcyāṃ tataḥ kañcana kōśamattaṃ mataṃ yatīśasya ca dūṣayantam .  
yō brahmatantrē caturō jayattaṃ tādṛkṣaśiṣyaṃ gurumānatōsmi ..

*"I reverentially bow to that Guru who had a disciple such as the shrewd Brahmatantra who became triumphant in debate with a heretic trying to defile the doctrine of Yatirāja at Kānchi!"*

-Vêdānta Deśika Vaibhava Prakāshika 146

### **The Turushka plunder of Śrīrangam:**

Year: Kali 4438, Dhatu Varsham

Date according to English calendar- 1336 C.E.

Place: Koil, Śrīrangam

The glory of Śrīrangam had reached great heights with the arrival of Vêdānta Deśika and the simultaneous presence of senior Śree Vaishnava scholars such as Sudarshana Bhattar, Pillai Lokāchārya and such others. The holy town resounded with the divine voices of these great Śree Vaishnava scholars engaged in doctrinal discourses on a daily basis. The affairs of the temple were being conducted smoothly. In the midst of that tranquil setting, trouble struck the holy city in an unprecedented manner! A Turushka army had begun its conquests in the southern kingdoms of the country. The residents of Śrīrangam heard of the attacks on nearby cities by a Turushka army which had now made in-roads into Tondai Mandalam (Northern Tamil Nadu). The army was now fast approaching the temple of Śrīrangam with a view of desecrating the ancient shrine. News of the army passing through the nearby town of Samayapuram came in. The city that was verily the heart of Śree Vaishnavism was now in great danger!

The Śree Vaishnavās of Śrīrangam got together to execute an emergency plan to protect the temple. A stone wall was built across

the doors of the sanctum so as to protect the main deities of Periya Perumāl and Tāyār. Replicas of the main deities were installed in front of the protective wall. The Utsava deity of Aḷhaghiya Manavālan along with His Consorts Śree Devi and Bhu Devi were hastily moved out of the temple premises in a palanquin. Śrī Pillai Lokāchārya along with Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and other disciples of Vēdānta Deśika took the initiative of moving the deities safely out of the city, into the forest. Amidst the havoc that had set in, Śrī Sudarshana Bhattar proceeded, in haste, to meet Vēdānta Deśika. On the other hand, Deśika was proceeding quickly towards the temple. Sudarshana Bhattar soon met Deśika and handed over the palm leaf manuscripts containing the Śrī Bhāshya with the annotated commentary of Śruta Prakāshika to him. This Śruta Prakāshika was a collection of elaborate notes made by Sudarshana Bhattar during the discourses on the Śrī Bhāshya rendered by the great Nadādur Ammāl at Perumāl Koil in Kanchi. Bhattar instructed Deśika to protect the Śruta Prakāshika so that the teachings of the Śrī Bhāshya according to the great exposition of Nadādur Ammāl may be carried forth. Along with the palm leaf manuscripts, he entrusted the care of his two young sons (Parāṅkusha Bhatta and Vedācharya Bhatta) to Deśika. Having done thus, Sudarshana Bhattar joined the hundreds of other Śree Vaishnavās who were preparing to face the Turushka army at the great temple of Arangam.

Vēdānta Deśika was torn apart with overwhelming emotions. Thousands of Śree Vaishnavās were preparing to give up their lives for protecting the Śrirangam temple. But, in his hands lay the Śruta Prakāshika- a great exposition on the Śrī Bhāshya of Rāmānuja, an extraordinary gloss which was based on teaching handed down through tradition. The Śrī Bhāshya had been composed to fulfill the wish of Yāmunāchārya, and it contained nectarine truths of the Vēdānta that had been clearly elucidated by Rāmānuja. The palm leaf manuscript also contained along with the Śrī Bhāshya, the great expositions of Nadādur Ammāl. Moreover the two young sons of

Sudarshana Sūri, being the descendants of the great Kūresha, were now under Deśika's care.

Sudarshana Sūri, the senior Śree Vaishnava scholar, had requested Deśika to protect the manuscripts and take care of his sons. Deśika therefore decided to act according to the wishes of Bhattar. By now, the city was being plundered, people ruthlessly murdered, women and children mercilessly tortured, and the temple was facing complete desecration in the hands of the Turushka soldiers! The walls of the temple were torn down, several shrines were shattered. Fear and panic had set in!

Vêdānta Deśika buried the palm leaf manuscripts in the earth along the banks of the river Tirukkāveri. He himself, along with the two young children of Sudarshana Sūri, hid from the attackers by lying down among the corpses. When the sun had set, Deśika repaired hastily to recover the hidden palm leaf manuscripts and moved away from the city of Śrirangam, taking the two young boys with him into the forest. He kept looking back in anticipation of seeing his beloved disciple Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and others. They were not to be seen! Soon Deśika reached the depths of the forest.

In the meanwhile, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and other disciples had assisted other devotees in the safe removal of Aḷhaghiya Manavālan Perumāl and His consorts into the forest. Pillai Lokāchārya had taken the initiative to accompany the deity through the further course of travel, so the disciples of Deśika turned back towards the temple looking for their beloved Âchārya. Noting the devastation of the sacred city, their hearts sunk. Moreover, fear gripped their hearts! Deśika was nowhere to be found! Knowing well that the grace of Lord Ranganātha would protect their Âchārya, the disciples wended their way back into the thick of the forest. Soon, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and other disciples ran into Vêdānta Deśika. Their hearts brimmed with happiness and Deśika shed tears of joy! Vêdānta Deśika, along Brahmatantra Swatantra

Jīyar and other disciples, and the two sons of Sudarshana Sūri, then went along the course of the river Kāveri through the dense forests to reach the safety of his home in Satyakālam.

The deities of Aḷhaghiya Manavālan Perumāl and His consorts were safely carried out of Śrīrangam under the protective care of Pillai Lokāchārya. Over the course of his travels for several days, the aged Śree Vaishnava scholar Pillai Lokāchārya succumbed to mental and physical exhaustion and attained Vaikuntam. At Śrīrangam, the great Sudarshana Bhattar attained Vaikuntam, owing to the ruthless hostility of the Turushkas. It seemed as though the 'spiritual sun' had virtually set upon the holy town of Śrīrangam forever!

### **Protection of the Śruta Prakāshika:**

To this day, the protection of the Śruta Prakāshika by Vēdānta Deśika qualifies as one of the most noble and significant events in the history of Śree Vaishnavism. Several factors account for this.

In the post-Rāmānuja period, the philosophy of the Śrī Bhāshya had come down in a traditional manner among the descendants of the Simhāsanādhipati families. Nadādur Ammāl, however, emerged as the foremost scholar among them, having achieved complete mastery over the doctrinal aspects of the philosophy of Rāmānuja. Ammāl was a Guru with unparalleled understanding and vision. In his capable hands, the Śrī Bhāshya received its most befitting exposition. This masterly gloss is the greatest and best of all commentaries written on the Śrī Bhāshya.

Being a descendent in the lineage of Kūresha, Sudarshana Sūri knew about the glory and importance of the Śrī Bhāshya. He had come to Perumāl Koil from Śrīrangam only to acquire the invaluable wealth of this knowledge directly from Nadādur Ammāl. When knowledge is acquired through the correct tradition, it is gathered in its true and original sense. Sudarshana Sūri was the wise

disciple who documented the precious teachings of Ammāl in a written record for the sake of posterity. The discourses delivered by Ammāl at the Kacchi Vaitthān Mantapam in Perumāl Koil came to be transcribed, just as was directly heard by Sudarshana Sūri. Ammāl therefore suggested that the work be named as ‘Śruta-Prakāshika’, i.e ‘the presentation of what was heard’!

In Vêdānta Deśika, Ammāl had recognized an innate brilliance, and the qualities required to become a future exponent of the immaculate doctrine of Rāmānuja. Owing to the age difference between them, Deśika could not become his direct disciple. Nevertheless, Ammāl had directed both Sudarshana Sūri and Kidāmbi Appullār to bestow upon the young Deśika all traditional knowledge in entirety. Sudarshana Sūri was aware of the benediction bestowed upon Vêdānta Deśika by Ammāl and therefore knew the capability of Deśika. Owing to these reasons, the manuscript of the Śruta Prakāshika was handed over directly by its author to Vêdānta Deśika for protection.

In reality, Sudarshana Sūri sought the protection of the manuscript in two ways. Firstly, he sought the physical act of protection of the ancient record. This was a manuscript containing the text of the Śrī Bhāshya, replete with a detailed and authentic exposition. When it faced the danger of irrevocable destruction during the raids of the Turushkas, the palm leaf document had to be preserved for posterity.

Secondly and more importantly- by handing over the manuscript of his work, Sudarshana Sūri strongly believed that Vêdānta Deśika was the one who was competent enough to imbibe the knowledge contained therein and become the foremost exponent of the doctrine of Rāmānuja. He recalled the benediction of Ammāl and knew that Deśika was the one to carry forward the doctrinal truths handed down through the means of correct tradition. This is the real

significance of the manuscript containing traditional interpretation coming into the hands of Deśika for protection!

श्रुतप्रकाशिकाभूमौ येनादौ परिरक्षिता ।  
प्रवर्तिता च पात्रेषु तस्मै श्रेष्ठाय मङ्गलम् ॥  
śrutaparakāśikābhūmau yēnādau parirakṣitā .  
pravartitā ca pātrēṣu tasmai śrēṣṭhāya maṅgalam ..

*"Salutations unto that most excellent Guru, who  
having initially rescued the Śruta Prakāshika manuscript,  
then taught the same to deserving disciples!"*

-Vêdānta Deśika Mangalam; 8

भाष्यप्रकाशिकां तां सङ्कटकाले सुदर्शनसूरिः ।  
प्रादाद्यस्मै कृतिने सेवे तं वेदचूडिकासूरिम् ॥  
bhāṣyaparakāśikāṃ tāṃ saṅkaṭakālē sudarśanasūriḥ .  
prādādyasmai kṛtinē sēvē taṃ vēdacūḍikāsūrim ..

*"I worship that virtuous Vêdānta Deśika to whom  
Śri Sudarshana Sūri directly handed over the  
Bhāshya and Prakāshika at the time of crisis!"*

-Vêdānta Deśika Vaibhava Prakāshika; 131

### Arrival at Satyakālam:

On reaching Satyakālam Swami Deśika became reunited with his wife and son. At the temple of Lord Varada along the banks of the river Tirukkāveri, in the forests of Satyakālam, Vêdānta Deśika performed the Brahmopadesham of the two young sons of Sudarshana Bhattar. He taught them the Vêdās and the Vêdānta, the doctrinal secrets and the meaning of the Mantras. He lived there for some time with his family and disciples.

At Satyakālam, Vēdānta Deśika was engaged in Siddhānta Pravachanam and continued the teaching of the Śrī Bhāshya according to the Śrūta Prakāshika. In this manner he fulfilled the wishes of Śrī Sudarshana Bhattar.

### Arrival at Tirunārāyanapuram:

The desire to behold the Lord of Tirunārāyanapuram made Deśika leave Satyakālam along with his family and retinue of disciples. Travelling along the course of the river Kāveri, they finally made their way through the forests to arrive at the holy hill of Yādavāchala. The beauty of the surroundings at that place made Deśika praise the Yādavādri hill as a shining beautiful ornament adorning the ear of the lady called 'the charm of Karnāta-desh'!

कर्णालंकृतिविभ्रमं भजति यः कर्णाटदेशश्रियः ।

karṇālaṁkṛtīvibhramam bhajati yaḥ karṇāṭadēśaśriyaḥ

*"This Yadugiri hill has the beauty of an ornament in the ear of the lady who is called 'the charm of the land of Karnataka'!"*

-Sankalpa Suryodaya; 6-52

Having bathed in the holy tank, Deśika and disciples beheld Lord TiruNārāyana, Yadugiri Nāchiyār and Lord Chellappillai with His consorts, shining in all splendor. He recalled that Rāmānuja had consecrated Lord TiruNārāyana and had spent many years residing at Yādavādri. He was also reminded of the incident where Rāmānuja assumed the thousand headed form of Âdisesha to ensure victory over the Jain opponents!

लक्ष्मीकौस्तुभलक्षणेन वपुषा वाचं विनैव स्वयं

श्वेतद्वीपनिवासिनामिव दिशन्संतोषमन्तर्मुखम् ।

विद्यावीचिसहस्रसंभ्रममिलद्दुग्धार्णवाडम्बरे

स्थानं संयमिसार्वभौमविजयस्थाने विधत्ते हरिः ॥

lakṣmīkaustubhalakṣaṇēna vapuṣā vācam vinaiva svayaṃ  
 śvētadvīpanivāsināmiva diśansantōṣamantarmukham .  
 vidyāvīcisahasrasambhramamiladdugdhārṇavāḍambarē .  
 sthānaṃ saṃyamisārvabhaumavijayasthānē vidhattē hariḥ ..

*“The Lord, beautified by the Kousthuba gem and by the presence of Goddess Lakshmi on His chest, silently dwells here, vouchsafing eternal bliss, just as He does to the inhabitants of Shwetadweepa! Lord Hari eternally resides in this land which is verily the scene of victory of the Emperor among ascetics, where a thousand ‘Vidyās’ can cause as little agitation as they can in the ocean of milk!”*

-Sankalpa Suryodaya; 6-50

At the shrine of Yatirāja, Deśika also recited the Yatirāja Saptati which had been previously composed by him, and sought blessings.

Here, at the holy place of Tirunārāyanapuram, Vêdānta Deśika continued to teach the Śrī Bhāshya according to the discourses of his Prāchārya Nadādur Ammāl as recorded in the Śrūta Prakāshika.

### **Bhagavad Vishaya Pravachanam by Vêdānta Deśika:**

At Tirunārāyanapuram, Deśika also continued his discourses on the tenets of Rāmānuja Matham according to the Śrūta Prakāshika. On one occasion, at the shrine of Yatirāja, Deśika beheld the Moola Bera that was installed by Rāmānuja himself and recalled the final instructions of the great Âchārya. He also beheld the Utsava Vighraha of Rāmānuja which was previously installed at Tirunārāyanapuram by Pranatārtihara or Kidāmbi Âcchan. This Utsava Bera was embraced by Rāmānuja himself previously so as to impart a portion of his energy to it!

At that very moment, through the agency of the priest, Yatirāja commended Deśika for his constant service towards the propagation of the Śrī Vaishnava doctrine! Rāmānuja also conveyed to Deśika that Varadāchārya would become the ‘Siddhānta Pravartaka’ in

future, for the benefit of Śree Vaishnavās. Overjoyed by the bestowal of Yatirāja's grace upon his son Varadāchārya, Deśika prostrated and paid reverence to the Archā Vighraha of Rāmānuja.

Deśika then taught his son Varadāchārya, the secret tenets of the Bhagavad Vishayam- Tirukkukurukai Pirān Pillān's six thousand, according to the quintessential truths revealed through Engal Ālvān, Nadādur Ammāl and Kidāmbi Appullār, and also revealed to him the great gloss 'seventy four thousand' that he himself had composed.

तत्रैव तस्मै यतिराजवीक्षा पात्राय पुत्राय च हर्षयुक्तः ।

दिव्यप्रबन्धार्थमुपादिशद् यः तं वेदचूडागुरुवर्यमीडे ॥

tatraiva tasmai yatirājavīkṣā pātrāya putrāya ca harṣayuktaḥ .  
divyaprabandhārthamupādiśad yaḥ taṁ vēdacūḍāguruvaryamīḍē ..

*"I praise that Vēdānta Deśika, who at Tirunārāyanapuram, happy with his son being the recipient of Yatirāja's compassionate glances, taught him the meanings of the Divya Prabandhās!"*

Vēdānta Deśika Vaibhava Prakāshika; 138

### **Bhagavad Vishaya Pravachanam by Varadāchārya:**

While Varadāchārya started to learn the Bhagavad Vishayam, Deśika noticed that Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar was keeping away from the Kālakshepam. Surprised by this, Deśika asked Jīyar the reason for his inability to attend the Bhagavad Vishaya Pravachanam. Jīyar replied that the only reason he stayed away was to obey the wishes of Udayavar, who had cast his benevolent glances upon Varadāchārya!

Udayavar, having cast compassionate glances, had ordained Varadāchārya to be the successor to Deśika in the propagation of the Siddhāntam. Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, being aware of this benediction, did not want to transgress this wish of Yatirāja! By

attending the Bhagavad Vishayam Pravachanam, Jīyar did not want to put himself on par with Varadāchārya, whom he now considered as an Āchārya. Out of the utmost respect he had for Varadāchārya, Jīyar now considered him as his Guru and wanted to acknowledge this fact. With this intent, Jīyar sought Deśika's permission to study the Bhagavad Vishayam under the tutelage of Kumāra Varadāchārya. Vennai Kūtha Jīyar agreed with this opinion of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and so did the other disciples. Vêdānta Deśika had to accede to this request!

Owing to this great gesture of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, Varadāchārya taught him and other disciples the tenets of the Bhagavad Vishayam- i.e. Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān's six thousand, and the elaborate gloss of 'Seventy four thousand' composed by Deśika. Therefore, in the Bhagavad Vishaya Parampara (lineage of preceptors of the Bhagavad Vishayam) Varadāchārya, the son of Vêdānta Deśika, features as the Āchārya of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar!

Out of immense respect he had for his young Āchārya, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar composed and recited the following verse prior to the commencement of the Bhagavad Vishaya Pravachanam:

श्रीमल्लक्ष्मणयोगीन्द्रसिद्धान्तविजयध्वजम् ।

विश्वामित्रकुलोद्भूतं वरदार्यमहं भजे ॥

śrīmallakṣmaṇayōgīndrasiddhāntavijayadhvajam .

viśvāmitrakulōdbhūtaṁ varadāryamaham bhajē ..

*"I worship Varadārya, the one born in the clan of Viswāmitra, who is verily a banner depicting the glory of the doctrine of Rāmānuja!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

He also recited the laudatory verse previously composed by Varadāchārya in praise of Āchārya Vêdānta Deśika:

श्रीमान् वेङ्कटनाथार्यः कवितार्किककेसरी ।  
वेदान्ताचार्यवर्यो मे संनिधत्तां सदा हृदि ॥  
śrīmān vēṅkaṭanāthāryaḥ kavitārkikakēsarī .  
vēdāntācāryavaryō mē sannidhattām sadā hṛdi ..

*“ May Vēnkatanātha, the venerable one, the lion among poets and logicians, the teacher of Vêdānta, ever reside in my heart ”*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar then composed another verse in praise of Vêdānta Deśika, outlining the importance of the grace of Deśika’s Sad-Āchārya Kidāmbi Appullār, and the importance of the overflowing grace of the entire Guruparampara with Rāmānuja shining as the brilliant central gem:

रामानुजदयापात्रं ज्ञानवैराग्यभूषणम् ।  
श्रीमद्वेङ्कटनाथार्यं वन्दे वेदान्तदेशिकम् ॥  
rāmānujadayaṭpātram jñānavairāgyabhūṣaṇam .  
śrīmadvēṅkaṭanāthāryam vandē vēdāntadēśikam ..

*“ I worship Śrī Vēnkatanātha, also called Vêdānta Deśika, the one embellished with knowledge and dispassion as ornaments, and the one who was the receipient of the grace of Rāmānuja! ”*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

The date for the Tiru Avatāram of these two verses of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and their combined rendering along with the verse ‘Śrīmān Vēnkata Nāthāryaha’ composed previously (10 years earlier) by Varadāchārya is given as:

Year: Kali 4440, Bahudhānya.

Solar Month: Āvani/Simha

Paksha: Shukla Dviteeya

Asterism: Hasta

Tuesday, August 18, 1338 C.E.

Place: Tirunārāyanapuram

Pleased with this magnanimous gesture shown by his beloved disciple, Śrī Vêdānta Deśika considered himself blessed by the grace of Rāmānuja.

The verse '*Śrīmān Vênkata Nāthāryaha*' had been previously composed on the occasion of Śrī Bhāshya Kālakshepam. Śrī Sudarshana Sūri had commended the rendition of the verse and therefore Deśika suggested the recitation of that verse at the time of studying the Śrī Bhāshya, Gita Bhāshya and other Sanskrit works.

On the other hand, the verse '*Rāmānuja Dayā Pātram*' had been composed on the occasion of Bhagavad Vishayam Kālakshepam. Moreover, this verse revealed the glory of the divine grace of the entire lineage of Poorvāchāryas. Therefore Deśika himself suggested the rendering of that verse prior to commencing studies on the Divya Prabandhās, Bhagavad Vishayam and other such Tamil works!

These verses composed by Varadāchārya and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar have thus immortalized the greatness of Āchārya Vêdānta Deśika! This fact has been recorded in the succeeding most important verse:

कल्यब्धेषु चतुस्सहस्रशतपङ्क्त्यब्धे यदुक्षमाधरे  
हस्तर्क्षे बहुधान्यवत्सरनभशुक्लद्वितीयायुते ।  
श्रीशः श्रीशरजिद् यतीशनिगमान्तार्यप्रभावोज्ज्वलः  
सुशलोकोऽवततार दिव्यमहिमा रामानुजोक्त्यादिमः ॥

kalyabdhēṣu catussahasraśatapaṅktyabdhē yadukṣmādhare  
 hastarkṣē bahudhānyavatsaranabhaśukladvitīyāyutē .  
 śrīśaḥ śrīśarajid yatīśanigamāntāryaprabhāvōjvalaḥ  
 suślōkōvatatāra divyamahimā rāmānujōktyādimaḥ

*"In the Kali year of four thousand - four hundred - forty  
 at the Yadu hill, under the stellar constellation of Hasta, in the  
 Bahudhānya year, the month of Nabha, under the conjunction  
 of shukla paksha dviteeya; due to the divine grace of Lord  
 Śrīman Nārāyaṇa, Satakopa, Yatisha and other Āchāryas; the  
 renowned benedictory verse beginning with the word 'Rāmānuja'  
 took birth to illuminate the greatness of Vēdānta Deśika!"*

-Pannirāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

### Return to Satyakālam and Composition of Abheetistavam:

After staying at Tirunārāyanapuram and performing Siddhānta Pravachanam there, Vēdānta Deśika moved with his family and disciples, back to Satyakālam. He heard that the state of affairs of the Śrīrangam temple was appalling after the attack of the Turushkas. Other Divya Kshetras had also been plundered and temples at various places suffered the same fate as that of Arangam. Vēdānta Deśika was steeped in sorrow and for the welfare of the world, he prayed to Lord Ranganātha-

कलिप्रणिधिलक्षणैः कलितशाक्यलोकायतैः  
 तुरुष्कयवनादिभिर्जगति जृम्भमाणं भयम् ।  
 प्रकृष्टनिजशक्तिभिः प्रसभमायुधैः पञ्चभिः  
 क्षिति त्रिदशरक्षकैः क्षपय रङ्गनाथ क्षणात् ॥

kalipraṇidhilakṣaṇaiḥ kalita śākya lōkāyataiḥ .  
 turuṣkayavanādibhirjagati jṛmbhamāṇaṁ bhayam ..  
 prakṛṣṭanijaśaktibhiḥ prasabhamāyudhaiḥ pañcabhiḥ .  
 kṣiti tridaśarakṣakaiḥ kṣapaya raṅganātha kṣaṇāt ..

*“O Lord Ranganātha, with your immensely great five weapons known for their prowess in protecting the followers of the Vēdā, please destroy within a moment the fear spreading in this world due to the Sakyas, the atheists, the Turushkaas, and other outsiders who have the qualities of being the representatives of Kali!”*

-Abheetistavam; 22

### Restoration of Śrirangam:

In fact, the prayers of Vēdānta Deśika were soon to be answered! By the grace of Lord Ranganātha, in the region further Northwest of Kānchipuram, in the beautiful land of Karnāta, the seeds of the great empire of Vijayanagar had just been sown. Even as the Turushka kings had taken over the kingdom of Madura, a great ruler by the name of Kampanna Udaiyar was beginning to expand his empire. This Kumāra Kampanna was the son of Vira Bokka Udaiyar, or Bukka, the third of the five great brothers who were the earliest rulers of the Vijayanagar Empire.

Kampanna, upon instruction from his father Bukka, first marched his army from his native land of Vijayanagara in Karnāta Desha towards Kānchipuram in Tondai Mandalam (Tundeera Mandalam or North Tamil Naadu). Here, he successfully defeated the local ruler and established a large kingdom extending from the city of Vijayanagara on the southern bank of the river Tungabhadra up to the limits of the entire land of Tundeera Mandalam.

At this point, an anonymous lady entered the court of King Kampanna and narrated to him the misrule of the Turushka kings at Madura.

अधिरङ्गमवाप्तयोगनिद्रं हरिमुद्वेजयतीति जातभीतिः

पतितं मुहुरिष्टकानिकायं फणचक्रेण निवारयत्यहीन्द्रः ।

adhiraṅgamavāptayōganidraṃ harimudvējayatīti jātabhītiḥ .

patitaṃ muhuriṣṭakānikāyaṃ phaṇacakrēṇa nivārayatyahīndraḥ ..

*"Lord Hari who was peacefully reclining at Śrīrangam is now being protected from a constant fear of falling bricks by the hood of the king of the serpents, Ādisesha!"*

अतिलङ्घ्यचिरन्तनि स्वसीमामपदेष्वर्पितजीवनप्रवृत्तिः  
मुहुरुत्पथगामिनी तुलुष्कानधुना हा नु करोति सह्यकन्या ॥  
atilaṅghyacirantani svasīmāmapadēṣvarpitajīvanapravṛttiḥ .  
muhurutpathagāminī tuluṣkānadhunā hā nu karōti sahyakanyā ..

*"The ancient and great river Kāveri who flowed within her well founded boundaries now flows like one who has lost her way, having become distressed by the Turushkaas!"*

सतताध्वरधूमसौरभैः प्राङ्निगमोद्घोषणवद्भिरग्रहारैः ।  
अधुनाजनि विस्रमांसगन्धैरधिकक्षीबतुलुष्कसिंहनादैः ॥  
satatādhvaradhūmasaurabhaiḥ prāṅnigamōdghoṣaṇavadbhiragrahārāiḥ .  
adhunājani visramāṃsagandhairadhikakṣībataluṣkasimhanādaiḥ ..

*"The Agrahārās inhabited by the Brahmins, which were once rendered fragrant with the smoke from the constant performance of Yajnas and the reverberating chants of the Vēdās; they are now abounding with the smell of scattered meat and the loud roar of the Turushkaas!"*

-Madhuravijayam, Sarga 8, Verses 2,6, and 7

Kampanna had a Brahmin general by the name of Gopanarāya. This Gopanna was a devotee of Lord Ranganātha. Kampanna had appointed Gopanna as the ruler of Chenchi (or Shenji).

Gopanarāya happened to visit the holy shrine of Tirumala. He was overjoyed to see that Alhaghiya Manavāla Perumāl along with His consorts had safely been brought from Śrīrangam all the way to Tiruvēkatam years ago, and had received uninterrupted worship at the temple of Tiruvēkatamudayān! These Utsava deities of

Aḷhaghiya Manavālan and that of His consorts had been shifted into the forests at the time of the raids at Śrirangam, and were finally enshrined at the hills of Tiruvēkatam.

Gopanarāya decided to move the deities of Aḷhaghiya Manavālan and His consorts back to Śrirangam. He first brought the deities to his kingdom at Shenji, and then moved them to the safety of the caves at Shingavaram nearby. The deities received worship for some time here at Shingavaram.

In the cyclic year of Sarvadhari, the Kali year of 4450 (current), (English equivalent date 1348 C.E), having defeated the Turushkas who had infiltrated into the temple of Śrirangam, Gopanarāya moved the deities of Aḷhaghiya Manavālan and His consorts from the caves of Shingavaram back to their original abode at Śrirangam. With the arrival of Aḷhaghiya Manavālan and His consorts, and the re-opening of the shrines of Periya Perumāl and Tāyār, the daily rituals of the temple were re-instituted. The glory of Śrirangam was thus restored!

Having heard the vivid description of the effects of the ruler ship under the Turushkas, Kampanna decided to attack the city of Madura. Gathering a large army, he marched against the Turushka Sultan and eventually defeated him in battle.

### **Deśika's return to Śrirangam:**

Even as Vêdānta Deśika prayed to Lord Ranganātha for the restoration of Śrirangam, several travellers who were passing through the forest of Satyakālam announced to them the news of the famous victory and the restoration of the temple deities by Gopanarāya! Vêdānta Deśika shed tears of joy. He and his disciples knew not how to contain their excitement, and at once proceeded to the shrine of Varada at Satyakālam. Prostrating at His feet, they sought his permission to proceed to Śrirangam.

On returning to Śrīrangam with his family and disciples, Deśika was enraptured! There was a feeling of jubilation among the devotees and numerous people had collected there to celebrate the freedom from the Turushka rulership. The memories of the massacre that had occurred at the temple only a few years ago still remained fresh; however the return of Aḷhaghiya Manavālan and His consorts had now ensured the spread of happiness.

Having bathed in the sacred waters of the Tirukkāveri, Vêdānta Deśika entered the Koil of Tiru Arangam. Lord Ranganātha sent garlands and Shatāri through the agency of the priests in order to honor and welcome Deśika. Having first worshipped Ranganāyaki Tāyār and seeking Her blessings, Deśika then entered the sanctum of Periya Perumāl to behold the divine Divya Mangala Vighraha of Ranganātha united with the Utsava Archā of Aḷhaghiya Manavālan and His consorts! Considering himself blessed, Deśika accepted the Tirtha and Prasādam bestowed by Perumāl through the agency of the priests and composed the following verse:

विधिविहितसपर्यां वीतदोषानुषङ्गाम्  
उपचितधनधान्यामुत्सवैः स्त्यानहर्षाम् ।  
स्वयमुपचिनु नित्यं रङ्गधामन् स्वरक्षां  
शमितविमतपक्षां शाश्वतीं रङ्गलक्ष्मीम् ॥

vidhivihitasaparyāṁ vītadōṣānuṣaṅgām  
upacitadhanadhānyāmutsavaiḥ styānahaṛṣām .  
svayamupacinu nityaṁ raṅgadhāman svarakṣām  
śamitavimatapakṣām śāśvatīṁ raṅgalakṣmīm ..

*"O Lord Ranga, You Yourself must protect 'Śrīranga Śrī'  
and thereby strengthen forever the prosperity of Śrīrangam;  
by destroying the adversaries and ensuring worship  
according to the injunctions of the scriptures, without  
any blemishes, with ever increasing wealth and riches,  
and ever growing delight of Your festivals!"*

- Source: Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Out of compassion towards his disciple Gopanārāya, who performed the noble deed of bringing the deities of Aḷhaghiya Manavāla Perumāl and His two consorts back to their abode at Tiru Arangam, Deśika composed a verse to honor his deed:

आनीय नीलशृङ्गद्युतिरचितजगद्रज्जनादज्जनाद्रे-  
-श्चज्ज्यामाराध्य कंचित्समयमथ निहत्योद्धनुष्कान् तुरुष्कान् ।  
लक्ष्मीक्षम्याभ्यामुभाभ्यां सह निजनिलये स्थापयन्नङ्गनाथं  
सम्यक्चर्यां सपर्यामकृत भुवि यशः प्रापणो गोपणार्यः ॥

ānīya nīlaśṛṅgadyutiracitajagadrañjanādañjanādrē-  
-ścañjyāmārādhyā kañcitsamayamatha nihatyōddhanuṣkān turuṣkān .  
lakṣmīkṣmyābhyāmmubhābhyāṃ saha nijanilayē sthāpayanraṅganātham  
samyakcaryāṃ saparyāmakṛta bhuvi yaśaḥ prāpaṇō gōpaṇāryaḥ ..

*“Having brought back from Anjanādri- the luster  
of whose dark peaks brings delight to the world,  
having offered worship at Chenchi for some time,  
then having slayed the bow wielding Turushkas in  
battle, Gopānārya, placed Lord Ranganātha  
along with his two consorts Śree and Bhu at their  
own abode, performed worship in the appropriate  
manner, and attained glory on the earth!”*

- Source: Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

With the help of Gopānārya, Deśika then ensured that the worship of the Chitrakoota temple was also restored according to its previous traditions. Following the defeat of the Sultan at Madura, Kampanna had entrusted his generals to ensure that worship at all temples was restored to its former condition, one after the other!

जित्वा तुरुष्कान् भुवि गोपणेन्द्रो रङ्गाधिपं स्थापितवान् स्वदेशे ।  
इत्येवमाकर्ण्य गुरुः कवीन्द्रो हृष्टोऽभवद् यस्तमहं प्रपद्ये ॥

jītvā turuṣkāṇ bhuvi gōpaṇēndrō raṅgādhipaṃ sthāpitavān svadēśē .  
ityēvamākārṇya guruḥ kavīndrō hr̥ṣṭōbhavadyaṣṭamaham prapadyē ..

*"I surrender to that king among poets who became delighted upon hearing that Gopānārya, having defeated the Turushkaas, consecrated Lord Ranganātha at His own abode in Śrīrangam!"*

-Vêdānta Deśika Vaibhava Prakāshika; 141

### **Tirumala Śrinivasāchārya seeks discipleship:**

It was at this time that, Tirumala Śrinivasāchārya, the son of Pundarikāksha, who belonged to the glorious familial lineage of Tiru Kurugai Pirān Pillān, came from Perumāḷ Koil to seek discipleship at the feet of Vêdānta Deśika and learn the quintessential teachings of Rāmānuja Siddhānta from him. Vêdānta Deśika taught him the essence of the Mantras, the Śrī Bhāshya, the Gita Bhāshya and also the Bhagavad Vishayam according to the Sat-Sampradāya.

Numerous other disciples also sought refuge at the lotus feet of Vêdānta Deśika. Among the disciples of Deśika, twelve remained very proximate to him and were considered as the chief disciples- 'Siddhānta Pravartakās' of Deśika Sampradāyam. These twelve proximate disciples included Varadāchārya and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, followed by Vennai Kūtha Jīyar, Prabhakara Jīyar, Kunjapur Rāmānujāchārya, Kandādai Embār, Tirumalai Śrinivasāchārya, Tirumalai Nallān, Teertha Pillai, Kidāmbi Pillai, Komandur Pillai, and Toopil Appai.

Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, Vennai Kūtha Jīyar, and Prabhakara Jīyar were the three ascetic disciples of Swāmi Deśika.

## Adhyayanotsavam at Śrīrangam:

Year: Sarvadhāri, Kali 4450

Month: Mārghaḷi

Date according to English calendar- December 1348 C.E.

Place: Koil, Śrīrangam

During the Dhanur Māsam of that Sarvadhāri cyclic year, the Kali year of 4450, certain controversialists with vested interests, having heard of the restoration of worship at Śrīrangam and Chitrakootam, decided to interfere with the affairs of the Śrīrangam temple. They arrived in Śrīrangam, after Gopanaarya had departed to Shenji, at a time when arrangements were being made for the celebration of the Adhyayanotsavam- the 'recitation festival'. These perverse minded people challenged the celebration of the Adhyayanotsavam and questioned the authority of the Divya Prabandhās. They criticized the worship of the Âḷvārs in the temple, owing to the fact that they belonged to various castes. They quoted select scriptural texts only to support their own views and convinced the temple authorities to discontinue the recitation of the Tamil Divya Prabandhās and the worship of the Âḷvār deities.

It may be mentioned here that Tirumangai Âḷvār had earlier obtained the blessings of Lord Ranganātha for the recitation of the Tiruvaimoḷi along with the Vêdās during ten days of the Tiru Adhyayana Utsavam celebrations of the Dhanur Māsam (or Mārghaḷi month). After a long lapse of time, Nāthamuni organized the resumption of the 'Tiru Adhyayana Utsavam' and conducted the sacred festival over a longer period of twenty one days. Rāmānuja, according to the instructions of Yāmunāchārya, ensured the smooth conduct of this festival annually in a regular manner. Rāmānuja also installed the deities of the Âḷvārs including that of Nammāḷvār and Āndāl at the Śrīrangam temple. With the plunder of the Śrīrangam temple, the celebration of these annual festivals had suffered. Taking advantage of this situation, people with vested interests now

arrived at Śrīrangam to challenge the celebration of this festival and to prevent its resumption.

Vêdânta Deśika, who now had returned to Śrīrangam to perform Siddhânta Pravachanam, heard of these arguments put forth by the controversialists. At once, he set forth towards the Tiru Mantapam (the great hall) of the temple where these opponents had camped. Here, the opponents were engaged in chanting the praises of inferior deities and other such Mantras with the hope of rendering Deśika inarticulate and mute so that he would be incapable of engaging in debate.

Meditating upon the lotus feet of the Lord of Arangam, Vêdânta Deśika chanted the divine Tirumantra along with the Dvaya Mantra. He then uttered 'Śreemathe Rāmānujāya Namaha'; and became prepared to face the challenge of these vile opponents.

In a completely erudite manner, Vêdânta Deśika explained the glory of the Divya Prabandhās. He showed that the divine compositions of the Âļvārs were but the same quintessential teachings of the Vêdânta, taught in a much simpler way. He pointed out that several esoteric scriptural truths embedded in the Vêdās can only be clarified by studying the Prabandhās of the Âļvārs. It is the works of the Âļvārs that help unravel the subtleties of the ancient revealed Vêdā, Deśika said. He also clarified the supreme status of the Âļvārs and indicated that they were a new ten-fold re-incarnation of the Supreme Lord. He used the analogy of the rain clouds to explain that the Âļvārs imbibed the salty waters of the vast oceans of the Vêdā and profusely showered it upon us in the form of pure, clean, and potable rainwater. By means of such numerous examples, Deśika established that in terms of import, there is no difference between the revealed Vêdā and the Tamil Prabandhās of the Âļvārs. Deśika pointed out that the Prabandhams are but beautiful garlands of Tamil verses sung by the Âļvārs in order to teach the quintessential secrets of the Vêdās in a language that can be easily

understood. He defended the glory of the Tamil language and argued that any language is auspicious for the praise of Bhagavān. Deśika also explained the glory of the Dramida Vēdā saying “*Ittham Satsampradāya Krama Samadhigataa Sesha Varnahi Vede*”, “this Tamil Vēdā is open to all, without the distinction of caste or creed, but it has to be learnt by means of established tradition!”

भाषागीतिः प्रशस्ता भगवति वचनाद् राजवच्चोपचारात्  
सा चागस्त्यप्रसूतात्विति परिजगृहे भूमिकाभेदयोग्या ।

bhāṣāgītiḥ praśastā bhagavati vacanād rājavaccōpacārāt .  
sā cāgastyaprasūtātviti parijagr̥hē bhūmikābhēdayōgyā .

*“The Lord is to be treated as one would treat a King.  
Just as the praise of a king can be sung in any language,  
so too any language is appropriate for singing the praise  
of the Lord! The language Tamil, procreated by Agasthya,  
is fit for use without any distinctions of caste or creed!”*

-Dramidopanishad Tātparya Ratnavali; Verse 4

Vēdānta Deśika thus demolished the opponents’ views and re-established the importance of Dramida Vēdās, in accordance with the doctrine of Rāmānuja. The Śree Vaishnavās of Śrīrangam and the temple authorities were pleased with the arguments put forth by Deśika. Celebrating yet another victory for the doctrine of Rāmānuja, the city of Śrīrangam now prepared for the festival of the Tiru Adhyayana! Having thus established the ‘Pramānyam’ (credibility) of the Divya Prabandhās, Vēdānta Deśika re-consecrated the images of the Âḷvārs within the temple with due honors. Śrī Deśika also ensured that the instructions for further conduct of the Tiru Adhyayana Utsavam annually, in an uninterrupted manner, were documented clearly and also etched in the form of a stone inscription- ‘Kalvetu’ at the Śrīrangam temple.

## Life at Śrīrangam:

Vêdānta Deśika continued to reside peacefully at Śrīrangam along with his close disciples. The assemblage of the Guru as excellent as Swāmi Deśika along with pre-eminent disciples, each of whom was a scholar in their own right, was indeed a scintillating sight to behold! One can only imagine the glory of the divine interaction between the great āchārya and his renowned disciples. However we are fortunate to have a vivid and accurate description of a day in the life Swāmi Deśika by a fortunate one who actually witnessed it! We are therefore tempted to digress at this point to dwell upon the glorious aspects of the life of Swāmi Deśika and his disciples at Śrīrangam. Here is what is recorded in sweet words by Kumāra Varadāchārya in his work ‘Śrī Deśika Dinacharya’!

काञ्चीपुरी यस्य हि जन्मभूमिः विहारभूर्वेङ्कटभूधरेन्द्रः ।  
वासस्थली रङ्गपुरी तमीड्यं श्रीवेङ्कटेशं गुरुमाश्रयामः ॥

kāñcīpurī yasya hi janmabhūmiḥ vihārabhūrvēṅkaṭabhūdharēndrah  
vāsasthalī raṅgapurī tamīḍyaṁ śrīvēṅkaṭēśaṁ gurumāśrayāmaḥ

*“We surrender to Venkata Guru whose birth place  
was Kanchipuram, dwelling place was Śrīrangam  
and who enjoyed visiting the Venkatādri hill!”*

सम्भावनां यस्य हि कालकूटः सभा भुजङ्गी कुणपं तरुण्यः ।  
स्याद्रौरवं राजगृहं स जीयात् चिरं गुरुर्वेङ्कटनाथनामा ॥

sambhāvanā yasya hi kālakūṭaḥ sabhā bhujaṅgī kuṇapaṁ taruṇyaḥ.  
syādrauravaṁ rājagrhaṁ sa jīyāt ciraṁ gururvēṅkaṭanāthanāmā ..

*“Eternal glory to that Guru named Venkatanātha who  
considered praise as poison, vain disputants as dangerous  
serpents, other woman’s attractive body as a smelly corpse,  
and a king’s palace as the infernal region ‘Rauravam’!”*

यः प्रातरभ्येत्य हरिं शुचीनि द्रव्याण्युपादाय शुचिः कृतेज्यः ।  
स्वाध्याययुक्तो निशि योगरुपां निद्रां समारोहति तं नताः स्मः ॥

yah prātarabhyētya hariṁ śucīni dravyāṅyupādāya śuciḥ kṛtējyaḥ.  
svādhyāyayuktō niśi yōgarupāṁ nidrāṁ samārōhati taṁ natāḥ smaḥ ..

*"We worship that Guru who observes Abhigamana to Lord Hari in the morning, then proceeds to procure materials required for worship, performs Tiruvārādhana during the mid-day, engages in the study and teaching of scriptures in the evening and meditates on the lotus feet of the Lord during sleep at night!"*

यामे तुरीये यतवाग्रजन्या विहाय शय्यां विहिताङ्घ्रिशुद्धिः ।  
योऽत्यादरेणास्थितयोगशेषं तं वेङ्कटेशं गुरुमाश्रयामः ॥

yāmē turīyē yatavāgrajanyā vihāya śayyāṁ vihitāṅghrīśuddhiḥ.  
yōatyādarēṇāsthitayōgaśēṣaṁ taṁ vēṅkaṭēśaṁ gurumāśrayāmaḥ..

*"We surrender to that Venkatesha Guru who abandons sleep in the fourth quarter of the night, waking up in silence, and remains rooted in meditative contemplation (Yoga) upon the Lord!"*

ततोऽनुसन्धाय ततिं गुरूणां तं चापि देवं रमणं रमायाः ।  
तत्कालयोग्यानि तथाविधानि हृद्यानि पद्यानि पठन्तमीडे ॥

tatōanusandhāya tatiṁ gurūṇāṁ taṁ cāpi dēvaṁ ramaṇaṁ ramāyāḥ.  
tatkālayōgyāni tathāvidhāni hr̥dyāni padyāni paṭhantamīḍē ..

*"Meditating then upon the entire Guruparampara, he recites Stotrās and Pāsurams appropriate to the morning hours, fixing his mind upon the Lord of Lakshmi. We praise that Guru!"*

उत्थाय गेहादुपगम्य रम्यां कवेरकन्यां कलिताङ्घ्रिशुद्धिः ।  
ततो विशोद्ध्याप्सु निमज्ज्य शुभ्रं वस्त्रं वसानं तमहं स्मरामि ॥

utthāya gēhādūpagamya ramyāṃ kavērakanyāṃ kalitāṅghrīśuddhiḥ.  
tatō viśōddhyāpsu nimajjya śubhram vastram vaśānam tamaham smarāmi..

*"Having risen, he leaves his house to proceed towards the beautiful river Kāveri. There he washes his feet and then bathes by completely immersing himself into the fresh waters. He then adorns clean bright white clothes! We meditate upon that Guru!"*

धृत्वोर्ध्वपुण्ड्राणि सरोजबीजमालामवन्ध्यां समुपास्य सन्ध्याम्।  
सावित्रमीशं सवितुस्त्वथर्चा स्तुवन्तमेकाग्रधिया स्तुवे तम्॥

dhṛtvōrdhvaṇḍrāṇi sarōjabījamālānavandhyāṃ samupāsyā sandhyāṃ.  
sāvitrāmīśam savitustvatharcā stuvantamēkāgradhiyā stuvē tam..

*"He then adorns his body with the twelve Urdhvaṇḍarās and a garland of lotus seeds. He performs the Sandhyāvandanam, facing the rising Sun and meditating upon the Gāyathri with an unwavering mind!"*

ततश्च पौर्वाह्निकनित्यकर्म निर्वर्त्य नित्येष्टनिवृत्तिमार्गम्।  
श्रीरङ्गधामोपसमेत्य सेवाक्रमेण रङ्गेश्वरपादमूलम्॥

tataśca paurvāhnikanītyakarma nirvartya nityēṣṭanivṛttimārgam.  
śrīraṅgadhāmōpasamētya sēvākramēṇa raṅgēśvarapādamūlam..

*"Following this, he completes the 'Nitya Karmās' of the morning. Remaining resolute in the righteous path, he then proceeds towards the abode of Lord Ranga. There he pays obeisance to all deities in the correct order and arrives at the sanctum to behold His sacred feet!"*

प्राबोधिकीभिः प्रतिबोध्य गीर्भिः प्रसाद्य तद्गद्यमुखैः प्रबन्धैः ।

आशास्य तन्मङ्गलमाप्तवाक्यैरापादचूडं कलयन्तमीडे ।।

prābōdhikībhiḥ pratibōdhya gīrbhiḥ prasādy tadgadyamukhaiḥ prabandhaiḥ.  
āśāsy tanmaṅgalamāptavākyaīrāpādacūḍaṁ kalayantamīḍē..

*"He wakes up Lord Ranganātha by chanting the Suprabhāta slokāś and Thirupalliyezhuchi pāsurams, followed by the Gadyatrayam and other Prabandhās. Reciting then the Tirupallandu Pāsurams as benedictory verses (Mangalāshasanam), he worships the Lord, enjoying His divine beauty from sacred feet to head!"*

तीर्थप्रसादादिकमस्य लब्ध्वा विज्ञाप्य देवाय ततो विसृष्टः ।

शनैरुपेत्याश्रमकल्पमात्मगेहं सुखासीनमहं स्मरामि ।।

tīrthaprasādādikamasya labdhvā vijñāpya dēvāya tatō visṛṣṭaḥ.  
śanairupētyāśramakalpamātmagēhaṁ sukhāśīnamahaṁ smarāmi..

*"Partaking the Tirtha and Prasāda thereafter, seeking the Lord's permission, he then proceeds back slowly to his hermitage-like dwelling place and sits comfortably there. We meditate upon that Guru!"*

व्याख्यानशालामुपगम्य चाथो शिष्यान् अनन्यान् श्रवणाभिमुख्यान ।

सङ्ग्राहयन्तं सकलानि तन्त्राण्यतन्द्रितं तं गुरुमाश्रये हम् ।।

vyākhyānaśālāmupagamya cāthō śiṣyān ananyān śravaṇābhimukhyāna  
saṅgrāhayantaṁ sakalāni tantrāṇyatandritaṁ taṁ gurumāśrayē ham

*"He then proceeds towards the Vyākhyāna Shālā (Kālakshepa Mandapam or teaching hall). There he imparts the teaching on numerous scriptures to those disciples who have eagerly gathered to listen to his discourse. We surrender to that Guru!"*

तास्संस्कृतद्रामिडदिव्यसूक्तीः प्रसन्नगम्भीरतया प्रसिद्धाः ।

तत्तद्गुचिभ्यः तनयाविशेषं प्रणौमि दान्तं प्रतिपादयन्तम् ।।

tāssaṁskṛtadrāmiḍadivyaśūktīḥ prasannagambhīratayā prasiddhāḥ.  
tattadrucibhyaḥ tanayāviśeṣaṁ praṇaumi dāntaṁ pratipādayantaṁ..

*"According to their individual interests, he instructs his disciples into the lucid and deep meanings of both Sanskrit and Drāmiḍa (Tamil) Divya Sooktis (works), treating his disciples as though they are all his own children! We salute this Guru!"*

शिष्यैरुपादानपरैरनन्यः समर्पितं भक्तिपुरस्सरं यत् ।

तेनैव शुद्धेन यथोचितेन तुष्यन्तमीडे तुषतुल्यरुक्मम् ।।

śiṣyairupādānaparairananyaḥ samarpitaṁ bhaktipurassaraṁ yat.  
tēnaiva śuddhēna yathōcitēna tuṣyantaṁīḍē tuṣatulyarukmaṁ..

*"We salute this Guru who was always pleased by the devout offerings of his disciples as 'upādāna', even while he considered gold as mere chaff!"*

इत्थं ह्युपादाय च शास्त्रशिक्षां तां चाप्युपादानपदे निवेश्य ।

माध्याह्निकं कर्म समाप्य पश्चात् वन्दे यजन्तं वरदं सदारम् ।।

itthaṁ hyupādāya ca śāstraśikṣāṁ tāṁ cāpyupādānapadē nivēśya.  
mādhyāhnikam karma samāpya paścāt vandē yajantaṁ varadaṁ sadāraṁ..

*"Studying the scriptures and instructing the same, in this manner, to qualified disciples, he proceeds to finish the Mādhyāhnikam and other necessary Karmas. Thereafter, he devoutly performs the Tiruvārādhanaṁ of Lord Varada and Perundevi Tāyār with the materials procured earlier!"*

अतस्करग्राह्यपवित्रपात्रैः अनिन्द्रियोन्मादकरैर्हविर्भिः ।

आराध्य देवं कमलासहायं आराधये तं विहितानुयागम् ।।

ataskaragrāhyapavitrāpatraiḥ anindriyōnmādakarairhāvīrbhiḥ.  
ārādhya dēvaṃ kamalāsahāyaṃ ārādhayē taṃ vihitānuyāgam..

*"In pure vessels that do not possess any material value to be stolen by thieves, and with Sātvik food which does not affect the senses, he then offers Naivedyam. Performing such an offering, he worships Lord Sriman Nārāyana! We pray to that Guru!"*

यामे चतुर्थे निहितारिवर्गं प्रबन्धनिर्माणविलोकनाद्यैः ।

तथा पुराणाद्यवलोकनैश्च कालं क्षिपन्तं कलये गुरुं तम् ।।

yāmē caturthē nihitārivargaṃ prabandhanirmāṇavilōkanādyaiḥ.  
tathā purāṇādyavalōkanaiśca kālaṃ kṣipantaṃ kalayē guruṃ tam..

*"During the fourth quarter of the day, he authors numerous excellent works to quell the arguments of opposing doctrines. Engaging in the study of other works and Purānās, he spends his time thus. We bow to that Guru!"*

सायन्तनं कर्म समाप्य पश्चात् समेत्य च श्रीवरदाह्वयस्य ।

सहान्तरङ्गैः कुलदैवतस्य समीपमारात् प्रणतं स्मरामि ।।

sāyantanaṃ karma samāpya paścāt samētya ca śrīvaradāhvayasya.  
sahāntaraṅgaiḥ kuladaivatasya samīpamārāt praṇataṃ smarāmi..

*"In the evening, he performs the obligatory duties. Then, along with his very proximate disciples, he bows to his ancestral deity of Lord Varada and Perundevi Tāyār!"*

आशास्य तन्मङ्गलमच्युतस्य तत्तत् प्रबन्धैश्च तदीयपङ्क्तिम् ।  
स्तुत्वैकतानं प्रतिगृह्य तीर्थप्रसादमेनं कृतकृत्यमीडे ।।

āśāsyā tanmaṅgalamacyutasya tattat prabandhaiśca tadīyapaṅktimm.  
stutvaikatānaṁ pratigṛhya tīrthaprasādamēnaṁ kṛtakṛtyamīḍē..

*“By reciting Slokāś and Prabandhās, with single pointed devotion, he performs the Mangalāshāsanam (benedictions) to Lord Varada and Perundevi Tāyār, and accepts Tirtha and Prasādam. With this, he considers that he has accomplished everything and remains contended! To that Guru we pray!”*

अथान्तरङ्गैरुपदेवगेहं अध्यास्य पीठं सरसैर्वचोभिः ।  
तेषां सुसूक्ष्मार्थविशेषशिक्षां कुर्वाणमीडीमहि वेङ्कटेशम् ।।  
athāntaraṅgairupadēvagēhaṁ adhyāsyā pīṭhaṁ sarasairvacōbhiḥ.  
tēṣāṁ susūkṣmārthaviśēṣaśīkṣāṁ kurvāṇamīḍīmahi vēṅkaṭēśam..

*“Then, with his intimate disciples, he worships Lord Varada and Perundevi Tāyār! Thereafter, he sits in the sacred Mantapam and with beautiful words, he instructs those proximate disciples into the subtle, special and most important doctrinal aspects!”*

शिष्याननुज्ञाप्य सुसूक्ष्मबुद्धीन् कृतप्रणामान् कृपया गृहेभ्यः ।  
अध्यास्य शुद्धं शयनीयमत्र योगाय सन्नद्धमहं स्मरामि ।।  
śiṣyānanujñāpya susūkṣmabuddhīn kṛtapraṇāmān kṛpayā gṛhēbhyah.  
adhyāsyā śuddhaṁ śayaniyamatra yōgāya sannaddhamahaṁ smarāmi..

*“Sending his proximate disciples, who are endowed with sharp intellect and who reverentially prostrate to him in gratitude, back to their respective homes, he reclines on his clean bed to engage in Yoga-nidra!”*

हृत्पुण्डरीके वरदं सदारं निवेश्य तत्पादसरोजयुग्मे ।

आबद्धचितं सुसुखं शयानं आराधये देशिकमस्मदीयम् ।।

hr̥tpuṇḍarīkē varadaṃ sadāraṃ nivēśya tatpādasarōjayugmē.  
ābaddhacitaṃ susukhaṃ śayānaṃ ārādhayē dēśikamasmaḍīyam..

*"Devoutly enshrining Lord Varada and Perundevi Tāyār within the lotus of his heart, focusing his mind in unflinching devotion towards their lotus feet, he sleeps peacefully with a sense of satisfaction! We pray to that Guru!"*

योगस्वरूपामनुभूय निद्रां यामे तुरीये प्रतिबुध्य भूयः ।

स्वस्वामिभावाकलनात्मयोगं भजे भजन्तं गुरुवेङ्कटेशम् ।।

yōgasvarūpāmanubhūya nidrāṃ yāmē turīyē pratibuddya bhūyaḥ.  
svasvāmibhāvākalanātmayōgaṃ bhajā bhajantaṃ guruvēṅkaṭēśam..

*"Having experienced the bliss of Yoga-nidra, he wakes up again in the fourth quarter of the night to engage in 'Atma-Yoga' by dwelling upon the Seshā-Seshi bhāva! We pray to that Guru Venkatanātha!"*

इत्येवमेतामिह सर्वतन्त्र स्वतन्त्रवेदान्तगुरुत्तमस्य ।

नित्याभिजप्यां शुभनित्यचर्यां जपन्ति ये ते दुरितं तरन्ति ।।

ityēvamētāmiha sarvatantra svatantravēdāntaguruttamasya.  
nityābhijapyāṃ śubhanityacaryāṃ japanti yē tē duritaṃ taranti..

*"Those who recite every day, in this manner, the daily Anushtānam of Sarva Tantra Swatantra Vēdānta Mahāguru, their accumulated sins are all destroyed!"*

Swāmi Deśika's life was closely associated with the three foremost 'Divya Deshams'. His mind was rooted in dispassion and therefore his pure heart became the eternal abode of the Lord of Lakshmi. Vēdānta Deśika followed the '**Panchakāla Prakriya**' assiduously. He would wake up in the 'fourth quarter' of the night (3 A.M.) and perform '**Abhigamana**' by meditating upon the Lord. He would start such meditation by first contemplating upon the glory of the entire Guruparampara. He would then proceed towards the beautiful river Kāveri and bathe in those pure fresh waters. Wearing clean clothes, he would adorn his body with the twelve Tiruman Srichoornams and a garland of lotus beads, and perform the Sandhyavandana facing the rising sun, thereby completing the 'nitya-karmas' of the morning. In the '**Upādāna**' period that followed, he procured materials required for the worship of the Lord. He would then proceed to enter the great temple of Śrīrangam. After worshipping the various shrines in the correct order, he would enter the sanctum of Lord Ranganātha. Partaking Tirtha-prasadam, he would proceed to the teaching hall in the temple so as to instruct his various disciples according to their taste. Swāmi Deśika happily accepted the materials offered devoutly by his disciples who procured them by 'Unccha Vritti' (alms), however he desisted material wealth such as gold etc – such was his greatness. After completing his '**Mādhyanika Sandhyavandana**', he would perform at forenoon, in the period called '**Ijya**', the Tiruvārādhana to his personal deity of Lord Varada and to Lord Lakshmi Hayagreeva. In offering food to the deities, Swāmi Deśika used pure vessels that were not made of precious metals. Rather, owing to the devotion that he had in his heart, the offering itself became precious and special to the Lord. Only after this, he would partake a sātvik meal (food that would not sway his senses), accepting the food that was offered to Lord Varada. In the '**Svādhyāya**' period that followed, Swāmi Deśika composed numerous works to uphold the Rāmānuja Siddhanta. After performing the evening Sandhyavandana, he would worship Lord

Varada and Lord Lakshmi Hayagreeva with his twelve chief disciples. Swāmi Deśika would then impart quintessential tenets of the doctrine of Rāmānuja to these twelve proximate disciples. Sending the disciples to their respective homes, he would then engage in 'Yoga' or inward contemplation and deep meditation on the Lord's glorious Divya Mangala Vighraha and limitless auspicious qualities. Placing the thoughts of the lotus feet of the Lord of Lakshmi within the core of his heart, Swāmi Deśika would then engage in blissful sleep!

Such was the divine daily 'Anushtānam' (practice of religious austerities) of Swāmi Deśika and his twelve chief disciples!

### **Composition of the Rahasya Traya Sāra:**

While residing at Śrirangam, Vêdānta Deśika undertook the magnanimous task of expounding the inner meanings of the three great Mantras, for the benefit of all Śree Vaishnavās. Vêdānta Deśika taught the inner sense of these Maha-Mantras according to the doctrine of Rāmānuja. The same teaching that had been imparted earlier to Kidāmbi Ācchan by Rāmānuja had then been imparted to Vêdānta Deśika by Appullār. Those teachings of Rāmānuja which had been guarded safely through the unbroken tradition of the Kidāmbi lineage were now documented by Deśika in the form of a detailed gloss called Rahasya Traya Sāra. Quoting extensively the statements of the Itihāsās, Purānās, Smṛiti texts, Poorvāchārya Granthams and the Divya Prabandhās of the Âḷvārs, Deśika exclusively composed the treatise to reveal the quintessential meanings of the three Mantras. According to correct tradition therefore, Deśika taught the spiritual wealth of Tattva, Hita and Purushārtha to Śree Vaishnavās who were intent on attaining Moksha. He then carried forward the unbroken tradition by teaching this extensive treatise to his disciples Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, Kumāra Varadāchārya and others.

With the writing of the Rahasya Traya Sāra according to established tradition, the composition of a detailed gloss on the Gīta Bhāshya of Rāmānuja, the writing of an extensive commentary on the Tiru Ārāyiarappadi of Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān, along with elaborate exposition of the Śrī Bhāshya according to the Śrūta Prakāshika and teaching of this Grantha Chatushtaya (four treatises) along with numerous other works to his eminent disciples, Vēdānta Deśika's illustrious career as an Ubhaya Vedāntāchārya attained unparalleled glory!

संप्रीणनार्थं शरणागतानां विनिर्मितं वेङ्कटदेशिकेन ।

भवान्धकारक्षपणप्रवीणं सेवे रहस्यत्रयसारदीपम् ॥

samprīṇanārthaṁ śaraṇāgatānāṁ vinirmitaṁ vēṅkaṭadeśikēna .

bhavāndhakārakṣapaṇapravīṇaṁ sēvē rahasyatrayasārādīpam ..

*"I worship the lamp called Rahasya Traya Sāram, which is adept in destroying the darkness of material existence, and which has been composed by Vēdānta Deśika as an offering to the Sharanāgathās!"*

-Vēdānta Deśika Vaibhava Prakāshika; 148

### Vāzhi Tirunāmam of Vēdānta Deśika:

On one occasion, the Prabandhānusandānam (recitation of Divya Prabandhams) was being carried out in the Tiru Olakkam at Śrīrangam. Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, out of admiration and gratitude towards his Āchārya Vēdānta Deśika for re-establishing the Tiru Adhyayana Utsavam, composed and recited the following laudatory verse:

पूर्वं तत्परकालनाथ यतिराडाचार्यसिद्धान्ति तं

श्रीरङ्गोऽध्यनोत्सवं प्रतिहतं भूयः प्रतिष्ठापयन् ।

वेदान्तद्वयभाष्यमप्यकलुषं भक्तार्यसद्विग्रहां-

-श्चाकल्पं निगमान्तदेशिकमणिर्जीयादजय्यात्मधीः ॥

pūrvam tatparakālanātha yatirāḍācāryasiddhānti taṃ  
 śrīraṅgēadhyānōtsavam pratihatam bhūyaḥ pratiṣṭhāpayaṃ .  
 vēdāntadvayabhāṣyamapyakaluṣam bhaktāryasadvigrahāṃ-  
 -ścākalpaṃ nigamāntadēśikamaṇirjīyādajayyātmadhīḥ

*“Victory to the precious jewel, Swāmi Vēdānta Deśika, the one endowed with an invincible mind, who proved the authority of the Ubhaya Vēdānta, consecrated the divine images of the Āḷvārs and re-established the interrupted Śriranga Adhyayanotsava, which had been previously instituted by Parakāla, Nāthamuni and then again by Yatirāja!”*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Vennai Kūtha Jīyar then composed and recited the following laudatory verse:

भाषागीतिर्नकार्या न च बहुमतिरप्यत्र तत्कल्पकानां  
 नापि स्थाप्यास्तदर्चा इति तदधिकृता मायिदुर्बोधितेन ।  
 यद्यत्रोक्तं प्रमाणं न हि विहतिरिहेत्युक्त आक्षिप्य पक्षान्  
 यश्चिच्छेदारणोक्तैश्श्रुतिशिखरयुगाचार्यवर्यस्स जीयात् ॥

bhāṣāgītimakāryā na ca bahumatirapyatra tatkalpakānāṃ  
 nāpi sthāpyāstadarcā iti tadadhikṛtā māyidurbōdhitēna .  
 yadyatrōktaṃ pramāṇam na hi vihatirihētyukta ākṣipya pakṣān  
 yaścicchēdāraṇōktaiśśrutīśikharayugācāryavaryassa jīyāt ..

*“Saying that the recitation of the Tamil Prabandhams is not appropriate, that the composers of those Prabandhams are not to be revered, and that their Archāvighrahams are not to be consecrated in the temple, the Māyāvādins thus propogated their fallacious view! Victory to the most excellent preceptor of the dual Vēdānta who threw out such faulty views of the opponents by indicating that their perception lacked authority!”*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

At that point, having heard and understood the essence of these laudatory verses, senior Śree Vaishnava devotees gathered at the sacred assembly were overcome by gratitude towards Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika. This Ubhaya Vedāntāchārya, Vêdānta Deśika, had established the doctrine of Rāmānuja on a firm footing by means of numerous victorious debates and by composing numerous treatises. He had re-established the sacred Tiru-Adhyayanotsavam at Śrīrangam and ensured its smooth conduct. He had established the credibility and the authority of the Tamil Divya Prabandhās. The Archā Vighraha of Âjvārs and Âchāryas were re-consecrated in the temple by him. He had also issued the orders to further carry out the Tiru-Adhyayanotsavam on an annual basis, and documented the same in the form of a stone inscription. In every way therefore, Deśika was an unmatched Siddhānta Pravartaka!

The Śree Vaishnavas of Śrīrangam had witnessed these noble deeds of Vêdānta Deśika unfold right before their eyes! Therefore, out of immense gratitude for having accomplished these numerous noble deeds, the Śree Vaishnavās of Śrīrangam then requested Vêdānta Deśika to approve the recitation of the verse '*Rāmānuja Dayā Pātram*' followed by the recitation of the verse '*Lakshmi Nātha Samārambhām*' prior to the recitation of the Divya Prabandhams!

Vêdānta Deśika then entered the sanctum of Periya Perumāl to obtain His blessings. At that point, the Lord of Arangam, pleased with the accomplishments of Deśika, spoke to him through the agency of the priest. "You have re-established the Matham of Rāmānuja, which is verily Our doctrine! You have moreover elucidated the doctrine of Rāmānuja in a clear and flawless manner! By doing so you have performed a service most pleasing to Us! In honor of your accomplishments, it is Our command that the verse '*Rāmānuja Dayāpātram*' be chanted prior to the chanting of '*Lakshmi Nātha Samārambhām*' at the commencement of every rendition of the Divya Prabandhās. This wish of Ours has been communicated to the Arayar as well!" Complying with the wishes

of Lord Ranganātha, the Arayar then began the recitation of the Divya Prabandhās with the rendition of the laudatory verses in praise of Vēdānta Deśika.

रामानुजदयापात्रं ज्ञानवैराग्यभूषणम् ।

श्रीमद्वेङ्कटनाथार्यं वन्दे वेदान्तदेशिकम् ॥

rāmānujadayaāpātraṃ jñānavairāgyabhūṣaṇam .

śrīmadvēṅkaṭanāthāryaṃ vandē vēdāntadēśikam ..

*"I worship Śrī Vēnkatanātha, also called Vēdānta Deśika, the one embellished with knowledge and dispassion as ornaments, and the one who was the recipient of the grace of Rāmānuja!"*

लक्ष्मीनाथसमारंभानाथयामुनमध्यमाम् ।

अस्मदाचार्यपर्यन्तां वन्दे गुरुपरंपराम् ॥

lakṣmīnāthasamārambhānāthayāmunamadhyamām .

asmadācāryaparyantāṃ vandē guruparamparām ..

*"Commencing with the Lord of Lakshmi, with Nāthamuni and Yāmunācharya in the middle, and all the way down upto our most immediate Āchārya- we revere our Guruparampara!"*

At the completion of the Divya Prabandha recitation, Deśika ensured the twofold repetition of the all important verse in the following manner,

श्रीमन् श्रीरङ्गश्रियमनुपद्रवामनुदिनं संवर्धय ।

श्रीमन् श्रीरङ्गश्रियमनुपद्रवामनुदिनं संवर्धय ॥

śrīman śrīraṅgaśriyamanupadravāmanudinam saṃvardhaya .

śrīman śrīraṅgaśriyamanupadravāmanudinam saṃvardhaya ..

*"O Lord of Śrī, may the prosperity of Śrīrangam (Śrīraṅga Śrīee) grow and be protected, without troubles, day after day (everyday)!"*

Pleased with the blessings showered by the Lord upon him, Vêdânta Deśika meditated on the feet of his own Guru Kidāmbi Appullār. Deśika knew that it was only by the grace of his Âchārya that he had been to conquer opponents and win fame! He then composed a verse in honor of his Guru Âtreya Rāmānuja:

नमो रामानुजार्याय वेदान्तार्थप्रदायिने ।

आत्रेयपद्मनाभार्यसुताय गुणशालिने ॥

namō rāmānujāryāya vêdântārthapradāyinē .

ātrēyapadmanābhāryasutāya guṇaśālīnē ..

*"I worship Rāmānuja, the son of Âtreya Padmanābhārya,  
the one who possess auspicious qualities,  
the one who taught the meanings of Vêdânta!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

The Śree Vaishnavas of Śrīrangam then repeated the laudatory verse "**Rāmānuja Dayā Pātram**" in praise of Vêdânta Deśika at the end of the Divya Prabandha recitation.

Periya Perumāl was immensely delighted with the rendition of the all these verses with the excellent verse "**Rāmānuja Dayā Pātram**", and called it verily a '**Samputa Gayathri**'! Conferring His blessings upon Deśika, He bestowed the Śatāri, Tirtha and Prasāda to him.

Having bowed repeatedly to the Divya Mangala Vighraha of Periya Perumāl, Vêdânta Deśika entered the shrine of Śrīranga Nāyaki Tāyār. The Supreme Mother of the three worlds, Goddess Ranganāyaki spoke to Deśika as follows, "You have brought out the true essential nature of Ours, as taught by Udayavar earlier. The quintessential truth contained in the words '**Brahmani Śreenivāse**' has been clearly expounded in its real sense by you. You are therefore the most suitable beneficiary of Udayavar's grace. You are most worthy of the honor conferred upon you by Periya

Perumāl! We are in complete agreement with the wishes of the Lord of Arangam, and therefore ordain you to perform Siddhānta Pravachanam within the precincts of this temple, right in front of this Sannidhi!” Saying thus, the Supremely merciful Goddess Śree conferred upon Deśika the Tulasi, Tirtha and Prasāda.

From that day, Vêdānta Deśika continued the Siddhānta Pravachanam of the Ubhaya Vêdānta in front of the Tāyār Sannidhi of Ranganāyaki Nāchīyār!

Beholding this jubilant scene, Kumāra Varadāchārya composed the following verses in praise of his Āchārya and father:

வாழி இராமாநுசப் பின்னான் மாதகவால்  
வாழும் அணிநிகமாந்தகுரு வாழியவன்  
மாறன் மறையும் இராமானுசன் பாஷியமும்  
தேறும் படியுரைக்கும் சீர்

vāḻi irāmānucap piḷḷāṇ mātakavāl  
vāḻum aṇinikamāntakuru -- vāḻiyavan  
māraṇ maraiyum irāmānucan pāṣiyamum  
tērum paṭiyuraikkum cīr

*“Glory to Nigamānta Guru who lives under the grace  
of Rāmānuja Pillān (Ātreya Rāmānuja)!  
Glory to his adept and scholarly teachings on  
the Tīruvaimōḻi of Nammāḷvār and on the Śrī Bhāshya!”*

வஞ்சப் பரசமயம் மாற்றவந்தோன் வாழியே  
மன்னுபுகழ்ப் பூதாரான் மனமுகப்போன் வாழியே  
கஞ்சத் திருமங்கை உகக்கவந்தோன் வாழியே  
கலியனுரை குடிகொண்ட கருத்துடையோன் வாழியே

செஞ்சொல் தமிழ்மறைகள் தெளிந்துரைப்போன் வாழியே  
 திருமலைமால் திருமணியாய்ச் சிறக்கவந்தோன் வாழியே  
 தஞ்சப் பரகதியைத் தந்தருள்வோன் வாழியே  
 செந்தமிழ்த் தூப்புல் திருவேங்கடவன் வாழியே

vañcap paracamayam mārravantōṇ vāḻiyē  
 maṇṇupukazp pūtūrāṇ maṇamukappōṇ vāḻiyē  
 kañcat tirumaṅkai ukakkavantōṇ vāḻiyē  
 kaliyaṇurai kuṭikoṇṭa karuttuṭaiyōṇ vāḻiyē  
 ceñcol tamizmaṛaikaḷ teḷinturaippōṇ vāḻiyē  
 tirumalaimāl tirumaṇiyāyc cirakkavantōṇ vāḻiyē  
 tañcap parakatiyait tantaruḷvōṇ vāḻiyē  
 centamizt tūppul tiruvēṅkaṭavan vāḻiyē

*"Long live the one who has come to defeat the rival doctrines!  
 Long live the one who lives to please the  
 divine will of the Saint of Sriperumbudur!  
 Long live the one who pleases the divine will of Goddess Lakshmi!  
 Long live the one whose thoughts rest in the works of Kaliyan!  
 Long live the one who delights in teaching the Tamil Vêdās!  
 Long live the one who is considered to  
 be an incarnation of the divine bell of Tirumala!  
 Long live the one who showed Prapatti as the Ultimate Refuge!  
 Long live Tiruvēnkatesa of Thooppul of the Tamil land!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Brahmatantra Swatantra Jiyar composed the following  
 Mangalāshasanam, or benedictory verses:

நானிலமுந் தான்வாழ நான்மறைகள் தாம்வாழ  
 மாநகரின் மாறன் மறைவாழ ஞானியர்கள்

சென்னியணி சேர் தூப்புல் வேதாந்த தேசிகனே  
இன்னுமொரு நூற்றாண்டிரும்

nāṇilamun tāṇ vāza nāṇmaraiḱa! tāṁ vāza  
mānakariṇ māraṇmarai vāza --- ṇāṇiyarka!  
ceṇṇiyaṇi cēr tūppul vētānta tēcikaṇē  
innumoru nūrrāṇṭirum

*"For enlivening the four worlds; for protection of the four Vēdās,  
for protection of the divine Vēdās of Thirunagari's Shatakopa,  
may that glorious Vēdānta Deśika, who is revered as the  
crown-jewel by great scholars, live for a hundred years more!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

The Śree Vaishnavas of Śrirangam who had gathered there then  
recited the following verses,

सर्वदेशदशाकालेष्वव्याहतपराक्रमा ।  
रामानुजार्यदिव्याज्ञा वर्धतामभिवर्धतां ॥  
sarvadēśadaśākālēṣvavyāhataparākramā .  
rāmānujāryadivyājñā vardhatāmabhivardhatām .

*"In all places, under all conditions, at all times,  
and with unimpeded strength, may the divine commandments  
of Rāmānuja grow and ever increase in prosperity!"*

रामानुजार्यदिव्याज्ञा प्रतिवासरमुज्ज्वला ।  
दिगन्तव्यापिनी भूयात्सा हि लोकहितैषिणी ॥  
rāmānujāryadivyājñā prativāsaramujjvalā .  
digantavyāpinī bhūyātsā hi lōkahitaiṣiṇī ..

*“Radiant with increasing ardor day after day, may the sacred commandments of Rāmānuja, which are indeed aimed at the welfare of this world, spread and extend in all directions!”*

All these verses together became called as the ‘*Vāzhi Tirunāmam*’. From that day onwards, according to the divine instructions of Periya Perumāl, the following procedure of recitation became a regular practice in all Divya Deshams and in all Śree Vaishnava households:

- 1) Recitation the verse ‘*Rāmānuja Dayā Pātram*’ followed by the recitation of the verse ‘*Lakshmi Nātha Samārambhām*’ prior to the recitation of the Divya Prabandhams;
- 2) And the recitation of the verses beginning with ‘*Sarva Desha Dasha Kāle*’, followed by repetition of the verse ‘*Rāmānuja Dayā Pātram*’ along with the Vāzhi Tirunāmam of Vêdānta Deśika at the close of the recitation of the Divya Prabandhams.

These facts have been recorded by Śrī Dviteeya Brahma Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar:

वर्षेतत्परसर्वधारिणि धनुर्मासे तु रङ्गस्थले  
संप्राप्ताध्यनोत्सवम् प्रतिहतिम् सम्मोचयन्तं गुरुम् ।  
सम्मन्यानघहृद्यलक्ष्मणदयापात्राख्य पद्योत्तमम्  
श्रीश्रीरङ्गपतीच्छया नियमितं दिव्यप्रबन्धाध्यये ॥

varṣētatparasarvadhāriṇi dhanur māsē tu raṅgasthalē  
samprāptādhyānōtsavam pratihatim sammōcayantaṁ gurum .  
sammānyānaghahṛdyalakṣmaṇadayāpātrākhyā padyōttamam  
śrīśrīraṅgapatīcchayā niyamitaṁ divyaprabandhādhyayē ..

*“Following that, during the Dhanur Māsam of the year Sarvadhāri, at Śrīrangam, Guru Vêdānta Deśika resumed the conduct of the interrupted Adhyayanotsavam! Goddess Śree and the Lord of Śrīrangam honored him by ordering the recitation of the most elevated, most cherished, blemishless verse ‘Rāmānuja Dayāpātram’ along with the recitation of the Divya Prabandhās!”*

तत्पश्चात् भुवि दिव्यदेशपटले श्रीवैष्णवानां गृहे  
 सर्वत्र द्रमिडागमप्रवचनं श्रीरंगराट् शासनात् ।  
 तत् पद्योत्तमपूर्वमेन सुधियः संतस्तदाकुर्वते  
 तत् संतुष्टमना सदिष्टफलदः श्रीशः सदा मोदते ॥

tatpaścāt bhuvi divyadēśapaṭalē śrīvaiṣṇavānām gṛhē .  
 sarvatra dramiḍāgamapravacanam śrīraṅgarāṭ ṣāsanāt .  
 tat padyōttama pūrvamēna sudhiyaḥ santastadākurvate  
 tat santuṣṭamanā sadiṣṭaphaladaḥ śrīśaḥ sadā mōdatē ..

*“Following this, in all the Divya Deshas on the earth and in individual homes of the Śree Vaishnavaas, the best among verses (Rāmānuja Dayāpātram) was uttered by the wise and learned people, prior to the commencement of the Divya Prabandha Pravachanam, in accordance with the divine mandate of Śrī Ranganātha! Being pleased by this, the Lord of Śree who grants us our desired wishes remains eternally delighted!”*

-Pannirāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

### **Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar in debate at Perumāl Koil!**

Certain Advaitins, who had previously been defeated by Vêdānta Deśika in the debate at Śrīrangam, felt offended and humiliated. They sought protection from a great scholar at Kāshi, narrated to him the events that had taken place and apprised him of the scholarly brilliance of Vêdānta Deśika. This great scholar, knowing the difficulty of challenging a master like Vêdānta Deśika, prepared himself for the task by bringing along with him great number of

manuscripts on the Vêdānta and being accompanied by several other erudite scholars who were adept in the art of debate. These scholars arrived at Kānchipuram and challenged the authority of the Visishtādvaita doctrine of Rāmānuja.

At that time Śree Vaishnavās such as Ghatikashatam Ammāl and Kidāmbi Nayanār were residing in Perumāl Koil. This Ghatikashatam Ammāl was the grandson of the grandson of the illustrious Nadādur Ammāl. Kidāmbi Nayanār was born in the lineage of one branch of the Kidāmbi family. These young Śree Vaishnavās, although well versed with the general teaching of the scriptures, had not yet been initiated into the Śri Bhāshya and other doctrinal works. They were not in a position to counter the arguments of the great scholar from Kāshi, and therefore they immediately sent word requesting the presence of Vêdānta Deśika at Kānchipuram.

Hearing that a certain scholar had arrived at Perumāl Koil in order to defile the doctrine of Rāmānuja, Deśika who was residing at Śrirangam, called upon his foremost disciple Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar. The Jīyar, obtaining the blessings of Vêdānta Deśika, set forth on his journey towards Kānchipuram, being accompanied by Tirumalai Śrinivasāchārya and other eminent disciples of Deśika. They first visited the Tirumāligai of their Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika. Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, out of utmost respect for his Âchārya, circumambulated the dwelling place of Vêdānta Deśika. Having then arrived at Perumāl Koil, the Jīyar prostrated flat and sought the blessings of Tāyār Perundevi and Perumāl Devarāja.

Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar entered the Tiru Mantapam at Perumāl Koil and called for the debate with the opponent. A great debate raged between the two scholars for seven nights! During those seven nights, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, with irrefutable scriptural backing, proved the authority of the doctrine of Rāmānuja. The opposing scholar conceded defeat and at the same time had his ignorance removed during the course of the arguments

due to the flawless expositions of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar. Praising him to be completely worthy of the title of 'Brahmatantra Swatantra', the scholar fell at the feet of the Jīyar begging forgiveness. He agreed to the fact that the Siddhānta of Rāmānuja was based on 'Pramānam' or scriptural authority, without any deviation whatsoever.

### The Glory of Sannyāsa:

Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar became pleased with the submission of the scholar. However in the conversation that followed, the scholar from Kāshi tried to humiliate Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar! The scholar remarked that the Jīyar had merely put on a disguise as a 'Kapata Sannyāsi', with the help of ochre robes, even as Rāvana and Arjuna had done so previously to deceive people. While Ravana and Arjuna had assumed the appearance of a Yati, in reality their intention was to abduct Sita and Subhadra respectively!

श्लक्ष्णकाषायसंवीतः शिखी चत्री उपानही ।  
 वामे च अंसे अवसज्य अथ शुभे यष्टिकमण्डलू ॥  
 परिव्राजकरूपेण वैदेहीम् अन्ववर्तत ॥  
 ताम् आससाद अतिबलो भ्रातृभ्याम् रहितम् वने ॥  
 ślakṣṇakāṣāyasamvītaḥ śikhī catrī upānahī .  
 vāmē ca aṁsē avasajya atha śubhē yaṣṭikamaṇḍalū ..  
 parivrājakarūpēṇa vaidēhīm anvavartata ..  
 tām āsasāda atibalō bhrātr̥bhyām rahitam vanē ..

*"Rāvana approached Vaidehi in the guise of a Parivrājaka (Sannyāsi), with the characteristic marks- clad in saffron clothing (Kāshāya), sporting a tuft of hair (Shikhi), an umbrella (Chattri), Sandals (Upānahi), and the left shoulder bearing the sacred staff (Shubhe Yasti) with a water-pot (Kamandalu)! The mightily strong Ravana thus approached Vaidehi in the forest when she was without the two brothers (Rāma and Lakshmana)!"*

-Rāmāyana, Aranya Kānda, 46, Verse 4 and 5

श्रीशुक उवाच

अर्जुनस्तीर्थयात्रायां पर्यटन्नवनीं प्रभुः  
गतः प्रभासमशृणोन्मातुलेयीं स आत्मनः ।  
दुर्योधनाय रामस्तां दास्यतीति न चापरे  
तल्लिप्सुः स यतिर्भूत्वा त्रिदण्डी द्वारकामगात् ॥

śrīśuka uvāca

arjunastīrthayātrāyāṃ paryaṭannavanīṃ prabhuḥ  
gataḥ prabhāsamaśṛṇōnmātulēyīṃ sa ātmanah .  
duryōrdhanāya rāmastāṃ dāsyatīti na cāparē  
tallipsuḥ sa yatirbhūtvā tridaṇḍī dvārakāmagāt ..

Śrī Śuka said,

*"Having gone to Prabhāsa while touring the earth in pilgrimage, the great Arjuna heard that Balarāma wished to give his maternal cousin (Subhadra) to Duryodhana (in marriage)! Desiring to obtain her for himself (in marriage), Arjuna disguised himself as a Yati (Sannyāsi) carrying the tridanda (triple staff) and went to Dwaraka!"*

-Bhāgavatha Purāna 10.82, Verse 2 and 3.

Even though he had been slighted with such debasing remarks, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar merely smiled and said:

लौकिकज्ञानहीनस्य वैदिकं तु न सिद्ध्यति

laukikajñānahīnasya vaidikaṃ tu na siddhayati

*"One who is not even familiar with the ways of the mundane world can by no means attain an understanding of the Vedic precept!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

“Being unable to even comprehend the ways and intricacies of the ordinary day to day life, how will you be capable of understanding the Vêdânta? Like Prapatti, the order of Sannyāsa when accepted in the prescribed manner is capable of yielding the ultimate good. Moreover, Sannyāsa not only leads to the highest excellence but is inherently capable of yielding all fruits, and any desired fruit whatsoever! It is true that Rāvana and Arjuna assumed the guise of a Sannyāsi for pursuing mundane pleasures. In their case, Sannyāsa helped in unintelligible gains. However, the important thing to understand is that even under those circumstances, Arjuna and Rāvana took the guise of Sannyāsis in a manner prescribed by the Shāstra, i.e. with the appropriate insignias of - tuft of hair upon the head (Shikhi), the sacred thread (Yagnopavita) and triple staff (Tridandam). The order of Sannyāsa when accepted in the prescribed manner- with Shikha, Yagnopavita and Tridandam- is alone capable of yielding supreme powers. On the contrary, when Sannyāsa is accepted without these prescribed insignia (i.e. Munda Sannyāsa- with shaven head and without the sacred thread or the triple staff) it becomes incapable of yielding even trivial powers. Such is the teaching, O scholar! Although in the situation of Rāvana and Arjuna the guise of a Sannyāsi was assumed for material gains, the correct means of assuming the ascetic order is taught, in accordance with the precept of the Vêdā and Shāstras.”

Tirumalai Śrinivasāchārya intervened at that point and bestowed upon Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar the blessings of Perumāl in the form of Tirtha, Tulasi, Śatāri and Prasāda. Being impressed by the divine personality of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and his profound knowledge in the Siddhānta of Rāmānuja, young Ghatikashatam Ammāl and Kidāmbi Nayanār sought refuge as disciples at his lotus feet. The laudatory verse of the Jīyar was recited by the Śree Vaishnavās at Perumāl Koil:

हस्तीशं लोकविख्यातं कौण्डिन्यां विदुषां वरम् ।

रामानुजार्यसिद्धान्तस्थापनाचार्यमाश्रये ॥

hastīśaṃ lōkavikhyātaṃ kauṇḍinyāṃ viduṣāṃ varam .

rāmānujāryasiddhāntasthāpanācāryamāśrayē ..

*"We seek refuge in the well known Śrī Hastīshar of the Koundinya Gotra, the best among wise men, the Âchārya who firmly established the doctrine of Rāmānuja!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Considering himself blessed by the grace of his Âchārya, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar along with his disciples sought permission of Varadaraja Perumāl to return to Śrīrangam. They again visited the Tirumāligai of their Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika and then started their journey towards Śrīrangam. En route, they also stopped at the temple of Chitrakoota to seek blessings of Lord Govindaraja Perumāl.

**Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar is verily like Bhāshyakāra!**

Vêdānta Deśika was overjoyed to see his beloved disciple Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar. His joy further increased when he came to know of the Jīyar's victory in debate. Beholding the Jīyar now flanked by his new disciples such as Ghatikashatam Ammāl and Kidāmbi Nayanār and also the very scholar from Kāshi who was defeated, Deśika shed tears of joy. He blessed the great scholar from Kāshi and gave him the 'Thiruvilachinnai' and the Dāśya nāma of 'Perarulāla Aiyan Appai'; meaning 'the disciple of Perarulāla Aiyan'. Hearing the manner in which Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar effortlessly expounded the tenets of the doctrine of Rāmānuja during the course of his debate, and beholding the Jīyar shining in the midst of eminent disciples, Vêdānta Deśika joyously

gave him the appellation '*Paryāya Bhāshyakāra*', meaning "the one who is verily like *Bhāshyakāra*!"

Tirumalai Śrinivāsāchārya, who had witnessed the manner in which Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar put forth his arguments in establishing the tenets of the doctrine of Rāmānuja, narrated the events to Vêdānta Deśika. In detailing the events, he wondered whether the arguments put forth by the Jīyar were 'Aparabrahma Śrishti' i.e. the creation of a second Brahman! Upon hearing this, Vêdānta Deśika remarked that in 'Yukti Kalpana' i.e. in putting forth authoritative proof, the skill of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar was indeed a 'Brahma Śrishti'! Vêdānta Deśika therefore also bestowed upon his beloved disciple the title of '*Dviteeya Brahman*' meaning 'a second Brahman'!

In accordance with these benedictions of Vêdānta Deśika, the disciple Ghatikashatam Ammāl composed this laudatory verse to honor his Âchārya Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar:

पर्यायभाष्यकाराय प्रणतार्तिं विधून्वते ।

ब्रह्मतन्त्रस्वतन्त्राय द्वितीयब्रह्मणे नमः ॥

paryāyabhāṣyakārāya praṇatārtiṃ vidhūnvatē .  
brahmatantrasvatantrāya dvitīyabrahmaṇē namaḥ ..

*"I bow unto Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, who is verily like Bhāshyakāra, who is a second Brahman and who is the remover of obstacles of those who seek protection!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Vêdānta Deśika, having become extremely pleased with the Jīyar, bestowed upon him the divine insignia of Shanka and Chakra, so that he could henceforth perform the Panchasamskāra for deserving disciples!

Following this event, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jiyar taught Ghatikashatam Ammāl, Kidāmbi Nayanār, Perarulāla Aiyan Appai and his other disciples the Śrī Bhāshya - Bhagavad Vishaya - Ubhaya Vêdānta, and other works of Vêdānta Deśika. The Siddhānta of Rāmānuja now continued its unbroken transmission to worthy recipients through Brahmatantra Swatantra Jiyar, who now became the Ubhaya Vêdānta Sat Sampradāya Pravartaka after Vêdānta Deśika.

ब्रह्मतन्त्रचतुराय योगिने सर्वतन्त्रचतुरो गुरुत्तमः ।  
वेदमौलियुगलं ह्युपादिशत् वादिसिंहमनघं तमाश्रये ॥

brahmatantracaturāya yōginē sarvatantracaturō gurūttamaḥ .  
vêdamauliyugaḷaṁ hyupādiśat vādisiṁhamanaghaṁ tamāśrayē ..

*"I surrender to the lion among debaters Vêdānta Deśika  
who taught his ascetic disciple the Ubhaya Vêdānta!  
While the excellent Guru Vêdānta Deśika was 'Sarva Tantra  
Swatantra', his disciple was 'Brahmatantra Swatantra'!"*

-Vêdānta Deśika Vaibhava Prakāshika; Verse 106

**Lord Varadarāja blesses Brahmatantra Swatantra Jiyar:**

Year: Saka 1282, Vikāri Samvatsara

Month: Mesha

Day: Purva Paksha Prathama

Nakshatra: Asvāthi

Friday, March 29, 1359 C.E.

Place: Perumāl Koil (Kānchipuram)

It was around this time that Vêdānta Deśika instructed Brahmatantra Swatantra Jiyar to establish a Matam at Perumāl Koil, to perform the daily Samārādhana of the Hayagreeva Archā, and to continue the propagation of the doctrine of Rāmānuja.

This wish of Deśika came to be blessed after Lord Varadarāja Perumāl Himself gave His seventh instruction on the Mesha Asvāthi Tirunāl of Saka year 1282 (C.E. 1359), proclaiming Brahmatantra Swatantra Jiyar to be the next Rāmānuja Siddhānta Pravartaka!

एतत् सुरासुराधीशमौलिरत्नप्रभारुणम् ।  
 श्रीमद्हस्तिगिरिशस्य देवदेवस्य शासनम् ॥  
 ētat surāsuraḍhīśa mauli ratna prabhāruṇam .  
 śrīmad hastigiriśasya dēvadēvasya śāsanam ..

*"Shining with the reddish hue emanating from the crown jewels of the supplicating God of divinities, this is the divine mandate of the God of Gods, the Lord of Hastigiri along with Śree!"*

நாமும் நம் பெண்களுடன்  
 சடகோபன் பாட்டுக்கேளாநிற்க, நம் வீடு கரும்பும் கேட்கும்  
 பெருமாள்தாதனும், நம் பட்டர்களும் சொல்லக்கேட்டு,  
 ப்ரம்ஹதந்த்ர ஸ்வதந்த்ர ஜீயன் என்று  
 நாம் பேர் கொடுத்த வைஷ்ணவ தாஸனுக்கு,  
 நாம் கொடுத்தபடி இவனுக்கு உண்டான மடமும்,  
 மடத்தை நோக்கி வரும் சேஷத்ரமும், சமாராதனமும்,  
 அதுக்கு வேண்டும் முத்துக்களும், இவன் தேடின  
 புத்தகங்களும், இதற்கு வேண்டும் உபகரணங்களும்,  
 நம் ராமானுஜ தர்சனம் நடக்கக்காக, இவனுக்கு  
 பின்பும் இவன் நியமித்த இவனுடைய சிஷ்யர்கள்  
 பரம்பரையாக இவற்றைக் கைக்கொண்டு  
 நடத்திப்போடக்கடவர்கள் ஆகவும்.

இவனை நம் ராமானுஜம் உடையாரும்,  
 நம் சமயத்தில் உள்ளாரும்  
 கைக்கொண்டு நடத்திப்போடச் சொன்னோம்.  
 இச்செய்தியைக் கல்லிலும், செம்பிலும் வெட்டிக்  
 கொள்ளும்படி இவனுக்கு நாம் முடித்தபடியும்,  
 உடுத்தபடியும், பூசினபடியும் கொடுத்தோம்.

*Naamum Nam Pendugaludan  
 Satakopan Paattu Kelaa nirka Nam Veedu Karumam Ketkum  
 Perumālataatanum, Nam Bhattarkalum Solla-kketu,  
 Brahma-Tantra-Swatantra Jiyan Enru  
 Naam Per-kudduta Vaishnava daasanukku,  
 Naam Kudutappadi Ivanukku Undaana Matamum,  
 Mathattai Nokki Varum Kshetramum, Samaaraadanamum,  
 Adduku Vendum Muttukkalum, Ivan Tedina  
 Puthakangalum, Idukku Vendum Upakarangalum,  
 Nam Rāmaanuja Darshanam Nadakkaik-kaaga Ivanukku  
 Pinbum, Ivan Niyamitta Ivanudaya Sishyargal  
 Paramparaiyaaga, Ivarrai Kaikkondu  
 Nadattipoddakkadavargal Aagavum*

*Ivanai Nam Rāmānujam Udaiyaarum  
 Nam Samayattil Ullaarum  
 Kaikondur Nadattippoda Chhonnom /  
 Iccheydiyai Kallilum Shembilum  
 Vettikollumbadi Ivanukku Naam  
 Mudittapadiyum Uduttapadiyum Pusinapadiyum Kuduttom /*

*While listening to the songs of Satakopa along with  
Our consorts (Śrī and Bhu), on the representation made  
by Our Bhattās and by Perumāl Tātan We are pleased to  
bestow the following upon a Vaishnavadāsa, to whom We had  
earlier given the title of 'Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar',*

- *A Matam which had been set apart for him*
- *the lands belonging to that Matam*
- *the Samārādhana to be conducted thereof*
- *the expenses required for such worship*
- *the books that had been acquired by him*
- *and the accessories required*

*So that he may propagate Our 'Rāmānuja Darshanam';  
and thereafter, the disciplinic succession that  
follows him may take possession of these and  
continue to carry the work forward!*

*We have also directed that all the followers of Rāmānuja  
and those who have embraced Our (Vaishnava) faith shall  
accept his appointment (as Rāmānuja Siddhānta  
Pravartaka) and continue to carry the work forward!*

*We have further ordained that this pronouncement be  
engraved on stone and copper; and We presented to him  
garlands that have been worn by Us, clothes that have been  
used by Us and unguents that have been anointed by Us!*

## Archā Vighraha of Lakshmi Hayagreeva:

The Shāntiparva of the Mahābhārata elaborates the glory of Lord Lakshmi Hayagreeva.

At the very beginning of creation, Lord Śrīman Nārāyana who manifests as Parā-Vāsudeva expanded into four Vyuha forms- Vāsudeva, Samkarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha.

The Aniruddha Vyuhā Murti then created, in His lotus navel, the four-faced Brahma and bestowed him with the Vēdās. The Lord also instructed him into the meanings of the Vēdās so as to enable the four-faced Brahma to perform the work of creation.

हिरण्यगर्भो भगवान्सर्वलोकपितामहः ।

पद्मेऽनिरुद्धात्संभूतस्तदा पद्मनिभेक्षणः ।

सहस्रपत्रे द्युतिमानुपविष्टः सनातनः ॥

hiranyagarbhō bhagavānsarvalōkapitāmahaḥ .

padmē aniruddhātsambhūtastadā padmanibhēkṣaṇaḥ .

sahasrapatrē dyutimānupaviṣṭaḥ sanātanaḥ ..

*“The grandsire of all the worlds, the lotus eyed - God Brahma, also called Hiranyagarbha, takes birth from the lotus in the navel of Lord Aniruddha and remains seated in that resplendent thousand petalled lotus seat, as the primeval being!”*

Equipped with the gift of the Vēdā from the Lord, and thus endowed with the ability to create the entire universe, the four faced Brahma became filled with pride. The all-knowing Lord Śrīman Nārāyana had already designed a plan to quell this misplaced pride!

पूर्वमेव च पद्मस्य पत्रे सूर्याशु सप्रभे ।

नारायणकृतौ बिन्दू अपामास्तां गुणोत्तरौ ॥

pūrvamēva ca padmasya patrē sūryāṁśu saprabhē .

nārāyaṇakṛtau bindū apāmāstāṁ guṇōttarau ..

*"In the petals of the primeval lotus which was effulgent  
verily like the sun, Lord Nārāyana had cast two  
water drops that possessed most excellent qualities!"*

In order to destroy the pride of Brahma, the Lord created (from a couple of drops on the primal lotus in His navel) two beings- Madhu who was an embodiment of the Tamo Guna and Kaitabha, an embodiment of Rajo Guna.

तावपश्यत्स भगवाननादिनिधनोऽच्युतः ।  
एकस्तत्राभवद्बिन्दुर्मध्वाभो रुचिरप्रभः ॥  
स तामसो मधुर्जातस्तदा नारायणाज्ञया ।  
कठिनस्त्वपरो बिन्दुः कैटभो राजसस्तु सः ॥  
tāvapaśyatsa bhagavānanādinidhanōacyutaḥ  
ēkastatrābhavadbindurmadhvābhō ruciraprabhaḥ ..  
sa tāmasō madhurjātaṣṭadā nārāyaṇājñayā .  
kaṭhinastvaparō binduḥ kaiṭabhō rājasastu saḥ ,,

*"Lord Nārāyana, the imperishable Lord without beginning  
or end, then cast His glances upon those two drops.  
Of the two drops with brilliant lustre, one looked  
like a drop of honey. From that drop arose 'Madhu'  
possessing the attribute of Tamas, in accordance with the  
divine will of Lord Nārāyana! From the other drop, which was  
quite hard, sprang 'Kaitabha' possessing the attribute of Rajas!"*

These two beings Madhu-Kaitabha possessed of Tamas and Rajas respectively, then stole the Vêdās from Brahma, and rendered him helpless. At that point, realizing the inherent glory of the Vêdā and its importance, Brahma sought refuge at the feet of his dear Lord Śrīman Nārāyana.

ब्रह्मोवाच,  
 वेदा मे परमं चक्षुर्वेदा मे परमं बलम् ।  
 वेदा मे परमं धाम वेदा मे ब्रह्मचोत्तरम् ॥  
 मम वेदा हताः सर्वे दानवाभ्यां बलादितः ।  
 अन्धकारा हि मे लोका जाता वेदैर्विना कृताः ॥

brahmōvāca,  
 vēdā mē paramaṃ carkṣurvēdā mē paramaṃ balam .  
 vēdā mē paramaṃ dhāma vēdā mē brahmacōttaram ..  
 mama vēdā hṛtāḥ sarvē dānavābhyāṃ balāditāḥ .  
 andhakārā hi mē lōkā jātā vēdairvinā kṛtāḥ ..

*Brahma said,*  
*"The Vēdās are my most supreme eyes! The Vēdās are*  
*my great strength! The Vēdās are my eternal abode!*  
*The Vēdās are verily my highest Brahman!*  
*The Vēdās have been forcibly taken away from me by the two*  
*demons. Without the Vēdās, the world is enveloped in darkness,*  
*and without the Vēdās I cannot engage in creation!"*

त्वया विनिर्मितोऽहं वै वेदचक्षुर्वयोतिग ।  
 ते मे वेदाहताश्चक्षुरन्धो जातोऽस्मि जागृहि ।  
 ददस्व चक्षूंषि मम प्रियोऽहं ते प्रियोऽसि मे ॥  
 tvayā vinirmitōhaṃ vai vēdacakṣurvayōtiga .  
 tē mē vēdāhṛtāścakṣurandhō jātōsmi jāgr̥hi .  
 dadasva cakṣūṃṣi mama priyōhaṃ tē priyōsi mē ..

*"I have been created verily by You! The Vēdās which are my eyes*  
*have also been created by You! Being deprived of the Vēdās,*

*I have become blinded. Do kindly wake up and return my eyes to me! For You are dear to me, and I am dear to You!"*

The pride of Brahma had thus been quelled. He had realized his mistake and was now remorseful. Out of His overflowing compassion, Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa decided to intervene.

ऐश्वर्येण प्रयोगेण द्वितीयां तनुमास्थितः ।

सुनासिकेन कायेन भूत्वा चन्द्रप्रभस्तदा ।

कृत्वा हयशिरः शुभ्रं वेदानामालयं प्रभुः ॥

aiśvaryeṇa prayōgeṇa dvitīyāṃ tanumāsthitaḥ .

sunāsikēna kāyēna bhūtvā candraprabhastadā .

kṛtvā hayaśiraḥ śubhraṃ vēdānāmālayaṃ prabhuḥ ..

*"Employing His own Lordship, the Lord assumed a second form- a body with the head of a splendid horse endowed with an extraordinary nose, and with a radiance as bright as the moon, appearing verily as an abode of the Vêdās!"*

That Supreme Lord of Lords, Parā-Vāsudeva Moorthi, now assumed a second form as Lord 'Vāgeesha', the embodiment of eternal divine knowledge with an immaculate divine form- the scintillating body of a human endowed with the splendid head of a horse. The body had a radiance of unsurpassable glory, appearing delightful, and bright white like the full moon. This form of the Lord is therefore called as 'Hayagreeva' ('Haya' meaning horse, 'Greeva' meaning neck) or 'Hayavadana' (the horse faced)!

Lord Nārāyaṇa is 'Śree Vishista', i.e. He is characterized by His eternal and inseparable association with Goddess Śree. Therefore, when the Lord assumed the form of Hayagreeva, Goddess Lakshmi assumed the divine form of 'Vāg Devi' or 'Vāni' and became

inseparably seated on the left lap of the Lord! This immaculate form of the Lord along with His consort as 'Lakshmi-Hayagreeva' is the foremost Vibhava incarnation of the 'Para-Tattva' called Śrīman Nārāyaṇa! Although this incarnation of the Supreme Lord is the most ancient, He appeared on the sacred day of Āvani month, Sravana Nakshatram, at the beginning of this current seventh Mahākalpa, for the re-establishment of the Vêdā and for its eternal protection!

रजस्तमोविष्टतनू तावुभौ मधुकैटभौ ।

ब्रह्मणोपचितिं कुर्वञ्जघान मधुसूदनः ॥

rajastamōviṣṭatanū tāvubhau madhukaiṭabhau .

brahmaṇōpacitiṃ kurvañjaghāna madhusūdanaḥ ..

*"The duo of Madhu-Kaitabha was the embodiment of Rajas and Tamas! For the sake of protecting Brahma, the Lord slew them both and became known as 'Madhusudhana' (slayer of Madhu)!"*

ततस्तयोर्वधेनाशु वेदापहरणेन च ।

शोकापनयनं चक्रे ब्रह्मणः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥

ततः परिवृतो ब्रह्मा हरिणा वेदसात्कृतः ।

निर्ममे च स तदा लोकान्कृत्स्नान्स्थावरजङ्गमान् ॥

tatastayōrvadhēnāśu vēdāpaharaṇēna ca .

śōkāpanayanaṃ cakrē brahmaṇaḥ puruṣōttamaḥ ..

tataḥ parivṛtō brahmā hariṇā vēdasātkṛtaḥ .

nirmamē ca sa tadā lōkāṅkṛtsnānsthāvarajāṅgamān ..

*"The Supreme Being dispelled the grief of Brahma by destroying the two demons and restoring the Vêdās to him! Having been thus furnished with the Vêdās by Lord Hari, Brahma then created the various worlds along with all the mobile and immobile entities!"*

एवमेष महाभागो बभूवाश्वशिरा हरिः ।  
पौराणमेतत्प्रख्यातं रूपं वरदमैश्वरम् ॥  
यो हैतद्ब्राह्मणो नित्यं शृणुयाद्भारयीत वा ।  
न तस्याध्यायनं नाशमुपगच्छेत्कदाचन ॥

ēvamēṣa mahābhāgō babhūvāśvaśirā hariḥ .  
paurāṇamētatprakhyātaṁ rūpaṁ varadamaīśvaram ..  
yō haitadbrāhmaṇō nityaṁ śṛṇuyāddhārayīta vā .  
na tasyādhyāyanaṁ nāśamupagacchētkadācana ..

*"Thus, Lord Hari assumed the divine, most eminent form with an equine head! Of all His manifestations this one, endowed with Sovereign Lordship, is celebrated as the most ancient! Whosoever constantly listens to or meditates upon the glory of the Lord's manifestation as Hayagreeva, they shall never suffer any loss of their learning!"*

- Mahābhārata, Shānti Parva, Moksha Dharma Parva

Having thus killed Madhu and Kaitabha, the Lord rescued the Vêdās and restored them to Chatur Mukha Brahma. Lord Hayagreeva is therefore also called as 'Madhusūdhana', as 'Kaitabhāri' and also as 'Madhu-Kaitabhāri'! Then, the Lord also initiated Brahma into the Pāncharātra Shāstra. In accordance with that, Chatur Mukha Brahma performed the Tiruvāradhanam to the Lord's divine form of Lakshmi-Hayagreeva!

The limitless compassion of the Lord and His consort did not stop here. Through an infinitesimal portion of the abounding compassion of Lord Hayagreeva, Goddess Saraswathi- the consort of Chatur Mukha Brahma, became initiated into the Supreme knowledge and was placed on the divine pedestal of the Goddess of learning. The

divine form of Lakshmi-Hayagreeva which was being worshipped by Chatur Mukha Brahma now came to be worshipped by Goddess Saraswathi also!

In the age of Kali, when Rāmānuja visited the Saraswathi Peetam at Kashmir, he was welcomed by Goddess Saraswathi with due honors. Pleased with the blemishless exposition of the Sutras of Vyāsa, Goddess Saraswathi honored the work by bestowing the title of 'Śrī Bhāshya' for the immaculate gloss! She gave Rāmānuja the title of 'Śrī Bhāshyakāra'! Not being satisfied at that, she also blessed Rāmānuja with an Archā Vighraha of Lakshmi Hayagreeva whose divine form was worshipped by her and by her consort Brahma!

Rāmānuja, having worshipped the Archā of Lakshmi Hayagreeva for many years, then bestowed the Vighraha to his 'Jnāna Putra' Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān. In the familial lineage of Pillān, the Archā Vighraha continued to receive unbroken daily worship and appropriate offerings for four successive generations. At that point, Lord Hayagreeva himself manifested in a dream to Pundarikāksha and asked that His Archā be handed over to Swami Vēdānta Deśika. Swami Vēdānta Deśika offered worship to the Divya Mangala Vighraha of Lakshmi Hayagreeva with his lotus hands until around the age of 90 years. At this point, he handed over the duty of incessant worship to his foremost disciple Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar. Just as Pillān was the 'Jnāna Putra' of Rāmānuja, Perarulāla Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar or 'Hasthinātha Yogi' was the 'spiritual son' or 'Jnāna Putra' of Swami Vēdānta Deśika. It is for this reason that Swami Deśika bestowed the glorious Archāvighraha to him.

With the founding of the Matam at Kanchi, the immaculate worship of the Divya Mangala Vighraha of Lakshmi Hayagreeva continues in the hands of the disciplinc succession of Perarulāla Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar! This unbroken disciplinc succession continues

even till today as the glorious Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Śrī Matam!

All these facts have been indicated in these excellent verses:

ब्रह्माणं प्रविधाय नाभिकमले वेदानपि प्राहिणो-  
द्यत्तस्मै मधुकैटभोत्थविपदो यत्रायते स्माथ तान् ।  
तद्धामावतु पाञ्चकालिकपथप्रस्थाननिष्ठैर्यतिश्रेष्ठैः-  
श्रीनिगमान्तदेशिकमुखैर्दत्तार्हणं देशिकैः ॥

brahmāṇaṁ pravidhāya nābhikamalē vēdānapī prāhiṇō-  
dyattasmai madhukaiṭabhōtthavipadō yattrāyatē smātha tān .  
taddhāmāvatu pāñcakālikapathaprasthānaniṣṭhairiyatiśrēṣṭhaiḥ-  
śrīnigamāntadēśikamukhairdattārhaṇaṁ dēśikaiḥ ..

*"The Supreme Lord, having placed the four-faced Brahma in His lotus navel, bestowed him with the Vēda, and also protected him from the adversity caused by Madhu and Kaitabha! May that very Lord; who then received worship according to the Pāncharātra Agama by eminent Āchāryas well founded in the Prasthāna, starting with Yatirāja, Vēdānta Deśika and such others; hereby protect us!"*

या वाण्या यतिराजराजवशगा चक्रेऽर्चिता या चिरात्  
प्राचार्यैर्निगमान्तदेशिकमणिश्रीब्रह्मतन्त्रादिमैः ।  
याऽध्यास्ते परकालसंयमिवरास्थानीमिदानीमपि  
श्रेयस्संविदधातु सैन्धवमुखी सैषा परा देवता ॥

yā vāṇyā yatirājarājaśagā cakrērcitā yā cirāt  
prācāryairnigamāntadēśikamaṇiśrībrahmatantrādīmaiḥ .  
yādhyāstē parakālasaṁyamivarāsthānīmīdānīmapi  
śrēyassaṁvidadhātu saindhavamukhī saiṣā parā dēvatā ..

*"The Supreme divinity Lord Hayavadana was worshipped by Goddess Saraswathi for a long time, then became the object of devout worship by Yatirāja and other great Āchāryas, followed by Vēdānta Deśika and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar; and continues to receive incessant worship even today in the Parakāla Matam! May that Lord Hayavadana bestow prosperity upon us!"*

श्रीमद्भाष्यं निशम्याद्भुतमिति शिरसा शारदा श्लाघमाना  
स्वार्चा या स्वीयपीठे सह यतिपतये भाष्याकाराख्ययादात् ।  
सेयं वागीशमूर्तिर्यतिपतिकुरुकेशागमान्तार्यमुख्यैः  
क्लप्तार्चा ब्रह्मतन्त्रोत्तमकलिमथनास्थानपूज्याऽधुनाऽऽस्ते ॥

śrīmadbhāṣyaṃ niśamyādbhutamiti śirasā śāradā ślāghamānā  
svārcām yā svīyapīṭhe saha yatipatayē bhāṣyākārākhyayādāt .  
sēyaṃ vāgīśamūrtirayatipatikurukēśāgamāntāryamukhyaiḥ  
klaptārcā brahmatantrōttamakalimathanāsthānapūjyādhunāste ..

*"Having heard the immaculate gloss, Goddess Saraswathi praised it as being extraordinary, nodding her head in appreciation! There at Shārada Peeta, she bestowed to Rāmānuja, the Archā Vighraha of Lord Hayavadana that she herself had worshipped, and also gave the title 'Bhāshyakāra' to him (Rāmānuja)! That same Lord Hayavadana, having been worshipped by Yatirāja, Kurukesha (Pillān), Vēdānta Deśika and such others, receives incessant worship even today in the most exalted Brahma Tantra Swatantra Parakāla Matam!"*

-Granthopasamhāra of the Alankāramanihāra

## **Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi Matam and Archā Vighraha of Lakshmi Hayagreeva:**

With the handing over of the divine Lakshmi Hayagreeva Archā Vighraha to Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, a precious legacy had been passed over for the posterity of the followers of the Rāmānuja Siddhānta. With the founding of the Brahmatantra Swatantra Swami Matam, another objective had been achieved- the establishment a sacred institution for the protection and propagation of the Rāmānuja Siddhānta. This was executed to fulfill the divine commandment 'Tirumugappadi' of Lord Varadarāja Himself!

Several quintessential facts are to be noted here:

- 1) The Archā of Lord Lakshmi Hayagreeva has been worshipped ceaselessly by an unbroken chain of Āchāryas. Śrī Bhāshyakāra handed this over to his foremost disciple, Ubhaya Vēdānta Simhāsanādhipati Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān. Having received worship in this familial lineage for four successive generations thereafter, the Archā Vighraha came to Vēdānta Deśika by divine intervention. Vēdānta Deśika was the next Ubhaya Vēdānta Pravartaka.
- 2) At this point, Lord Varadarāja declared His seventh instruction! Consecrating Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar as 'Rāmānuja Siddhānta Sthapanāchārya', He ordained that the followers of Rāmānuja Siddhānta honor and support the duties carried out by this Matam consecrated by Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and further headed by a disciplinic succession appointed by him. This was the event that led to the historical founding of the first Matam during the post-Rāmānuja period.
- 3) The establishment of this Matam also carries a special significance. It is a 'Jnāna Peetam' or the 'Seat of knowledge', wherein the presiding deity is Lord Lakshmi

Hayagreeva. This Jnāna Peetam is verily the fountain of knowledge for the quintessential teachings of Rāmānuja Siddhānta. Vêdānta Deśika, the Ubhaya Vêdānta Pravartaka and direct preceptor of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar was the Parama-Âchārya of this institution. A disciplinic succession was then initiated by him to ensure incessant and appropriate worship of Lord Lakshmi Hayagreeva. The Âchāryas of this disciplinic succession are entitled 'Śri Lakshmi Hayavadana Divya Paduka Sevakas' or 'the servants of the divine feet of Lakshmi Hayavadana'.

- 4) This was the first established 'Granthālaya' or library for protecting the ancient Maha-kosams (great works) of the doctrine of Rāmānuja. Under the direction of Lord Varada, funds were approbated for the conservation of this Granthālaya. Vêdānta Deśika, the Prāchārya of this institution was responsible for saving the manuscript of the Śri Bhāshya with the commentary of Śruta-Prakāshika, during the raids of the Turushkaas. But for this noble act, the tenets explained in the Śri Bhāshya would have been lost to mankind forever. Following this incident, the Matam took the initiative of preserving such ancient granthams.
- 5) Brahmatantra Swatantra Matam is the primary Matam for all followers of the Deśika Sampradāyam without exception. Among all the followers of Rāmānuja's doctrine, irrespective of their Samāshrayana Parampara, the traditional knowledge of the Śri Bhāshya is passed on through the founder Âchārya of this Matam only.

The glorious immaculate Archā of Lord Lakshmi Hayagreeva which was worshipped by Yatirāja Rāmānuja now came to be worshipped by Hasthinātha Yogeeshha who was verily 'Paryāya Bhāshyakāra' (like a second Rāmānuja)! The divine legacy handed down from Rāmānuja to Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar has been immortalized in this most excellent verse:

श्रीमान् पर्यायरामानुजयतिनृपतिर्ब्रह्मतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रो  
वेदान्ताचार्यदीव्यत्पदनलिनरसास्वादसच्चञ्चरीकः ।  
आचार्याराधित श्रीहयवदनसमाराधनो हस्तिनाथो  
योगीशानः स जीयाद अनवधिमहिमा नित्यमत्यद्भुतश्रीः ॥

śrīmān paryāyarāmānujayatinṛpatirbrahmatantrasvatantrō  
vēdāntācāryadīvyatpadanaḥinarasāsvādasaccañcarīkaḥ .  
ācāryārādhitā śrīhayavadanasamārādhanō hastināthō  
yōgīśānaḥ sa jīyād anavadhimahimā nityamatyadbhutaśrīḥ ..

*"May there be victory to the limitless greatness and  
undying extraordinary glory of Hasthinātha Yogi,  
also well known as 'Paryāya Rāmānuja' Brahmatantra  
Swatantra Jīyar, the one who is verily a bee that  
incessantly longs to savor the nectar of the divine  
lotus feet of Vēdānta Deśika, and the one who  
offered appropriate servitude to the Archrāvighraha  
of Lakshmi-Hayagreeva which was earlier worshipped  
by the king among ascetics Āchārya Rāmānuja himself!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

### The composition of the Divya Sūri Stotram:

While delivering discourses on the Śrī Bhāshya and Bhagavad Vishayam, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar was overcome by gratitude towards the Purvāchārya's for their contribution in the safe preservation and propagation of the Vēdānta doctrine. Out of this sincere sentiment, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar composed a hymn eulogizing the Āchārya Parampara- inclusive of the foremost Āchārya Śrīman Nārāyana, the twelve Āḷvārs and other important Āchāryas. In this hymn, he also outlined the Avatāra Rahasyas of the Āḷvārs and Āchāryas and details of their divine descent. He

named this hymn as the 'Divya Sūri Stuti' and placed it in the lotus hands of Vêdānta Deśika as an offering.

श्रीमद् वेदान्तसिद्धान्तस्थापनानित्यदीक्षितम् ।

श्रीमन् नारायणं वन्दे भान्तं सूरिगुरुत्तमैः ॥

śrīmad vêdāntasiddhāntasthāpanānityadīkṣitam .

śrīman nārāyaṇaṁ vandē bhāntaṁ sūrigurūttamaiḥ ..

- Divya Sūri Stotram

Vêdānta Deśika became much pleased with the praise of the Âchārya Parampara in the Divya Sūri Stuti composed by his dear disciple. Having heard the Divya Sūri Stuti, Deśika remarked that it was very pleasing to his ears! Deśika himself then composed a work in the Tamil language enumerating precisely the number of Prabandhams composed by each Âḷvār and the number of Pāsurams in each Prabandham, in order that there may be no miscalculation during times to come. He called this work of 18 stanzas as Prabandha Sāra, and taught this to his disciples.

### Consecration of the Vighraha of Vêdānta Deśika by himself

At around this time, a famous sculptor came to confront the aged Vêdānta Deśika in the skills of sculpting. He challenged Deśika, the master of all arts, to carve out an idol of himself. That night, the Lord appeared in the dream of Vêdānta Deśika and instructed him to carve out an idol of himself with the left hand in the 'Upadesha Mudra' or 'instruction pose' and the right hand carrying the Śri Bhāshya.

Deśika called for the sculptor the next morning and told him about the dream he had. In the presence of the sculptor, Vêdānta Deśika carved out a mud cast of his own image, decked with the Urdhva Pundaras, depicting a instructive pose in the left hand and carrying the Śri Bhāshya Kosham in the right hand, replete with all the

appropriate beautifying characteristics as instructed by the Lord Himself. The mud image was then used to cast a metal image with Panchaloha. Beholding the magnificent idol sculpted by Deśika, the sculptor stood speechless. At this point, Deśika requested the sculptor to carve a platform for the Vighraha.

Thinking that he would be able to improvise on the facial features of Vêdānta Deśika's Vighraha, the sculptor took his chisel and tapped the cheek of the idol in an attempt to embellish it. At that moment, with his own eyes, he saw the cheeks of Vêdānta Deśika bleed! Realizing that the Vighraha was not an ordinary one,\* he immediately prostrated at the feet of Vêdānta Deśika, seeking forgiveness.

### **Vêdānta Deśika attains Parama Padam:**

Year: Saumya

Month: Vrischika

Nakshatra: Karthika

Day: Poornima

Wednesday, November 14, 1369 C.E.

Place: Vadakku Tiruveedhi, Śrirangam

Vêdānta Deśika had now completed one hundred glorious years on this earth, living his life as an illustrious Ubhaya Vedāntāchārya Rāmānuja Siddhānta Pravartaka. He had composed numerous other works, including Divya Desha Mangalāshasanam, various stotras, treatises on Visishtādvaita, and other such works numbering to over one-hundred. He had re-established the Siddhānta of Rāmānuja, the glory of the Âḷvārs, the authority of the Divya Prabandhams, the secrets of the three Maha Mantras, the finer

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\* This Archā Vighram of Vêdānta Deśika has been consecrated at Tiruvahindrapuram by Brahmatantra Swatantra Jiyar and Nainār Âchārya.

points of the Visishtādvaita philosophy, and also the essential nature of the divine couple Śrīman Nārāyaṇa. By these, Deśika had satisfied completely the desires of Periya Perumāl. He had nurtured eminent disciples like Brahmaṇtra Swatantra Jīyar to carry forward the sacred task of protecting and preserving the Siddhānta of Rāmānuja. He had discoursed on the Śrī Bhāṣya and Bhagavad Vishaya Rahasyas numerous times, many of them delivered within the precincts of the Śrīrangam temple right opposite to the shrine of Ranganāyaki Tāyār. It was at this time that the divine couple Periya Perumāl and Pirātti gave permission to Vēdānta Deśika to ascend to the seat of Parama Padam.

माता देवि त्वमसि भगवान् वासुदेवः पिता मे  
जातः सोऽहं जननि युवयोरेकलक्ष्यं दयायाः ।  
दत्तो युष्मत्परिजनतया देशिकैरप्यतस्त्वं  
किं ते भूयः प्रियमिति किल स्मेरवक्त्रा विभासि ॥

mātā dēvi tvamasi bhagavān vāsudēvaḥ pitā mē  
jātaḥ sōaḥaṃ janani yuvayōrēkalakṣyaṃ dayāyāḥ .  
dattō yuṣmatparijanatayā dēśikairapyatastvaṃ  
kiṃ tē bhūyaḥ priyamiti kila smēravaktrā vibhāsi .

*"You are my Mother, Lord Vāsudeva is my father!  
I am the foremost recipient of Your compassion!  
Those preceptors who made me Your eternal servant,  
I have verily obtained through You! Your smiling lustrous  
countenance seems to be asking me 'What favours do you want?'"*

-Śrī Stuti; Verse 23

Having no other desires, Vēdānta Deśika was pleased to hear the wishes of Perumāl. He proceeded to the temple of Arangam; prayed to the Â|vārs, Purva Âchāryas and to Periya Perumāl and Ranganāyaki Tāyār, and sought their divine blessings. Through the

agency of the priests, Periya Perumāl and Tāyār commanded that an Archā Vighram of Vêdānta Deśika be consecrated within the precincts of their shrine, and that too directly opposite to the shrine of Ranganāyaki Tāyār. This unique privilege was bestowed by Tāyār to honor the glorious contributions of Vêdānta Deśika in establishing the doctrine of Rāmānuja! They also conveyed the fact that Vêdānta Deśika had nurtured and taken care of the Siddhānta of Rāmānuja such that it had reached its highest glory. Deśika had rendered a service that was most pleasing to the Divine Couple!

Considering himself blessed, Deśika returned to his residence and performed a Vishêsha Samārādhana to his personal deities of Varadarāja Perumāl and Lakshmi Hayagreeva on that very Tirukkartikai day. He announced to his disciples that time had come for him to leave the mortal world. Seeing the sad state of his disciples, Vêdānta Deśika reminded them of the words of Rāmānuja. Deśika said

*‘Ivar aruliccheidu arulina vaartai’*

*“oru van prapannanaanaal avanudaya atma yatrai bhagavad  
adhiinai aagayaale adil avanukku anvayamillai.  
Undenrirundaanaagil atma samarpanam poyyaamittanai. Deha  
yaatrai karmaadhinai aagayaale adukku karayavenda.  
Karaindanaagil naastikanaam ittanai. Aagayaal ubhaya  
yaatraiyum kondu ivanukku kaaryamillai. Aanaal mano vaak  
kaayangalaakira trividha karanangalaiyum kondu vendittru  
cheidu tiriavamayum ennai, adhu ivanukku swaroopamanru;  
upaayaamsattil anvayamillavittalum praapyamaana kainkaryattile  
ivarrai anvayappikkum attanai. Adil ivanukku ingirundanaal  
pannalaam kainkaryam anju undu; avaiyaavana- bhaashyattai  
vaasittu pravartippittal, adukku yogyataiyillayaagil  
aruliccheyalaikkettu pravartippittal, adukku yogyataiyillayaagil  
ugandarulina divya deshangelukku amudupadi shaattuppadi  
tiruvilakku tirumaalaigalai undaakkudal, adukku*

*yogyataiyillayaagil dvayattinudaiya arthaanusandhaanam  
pannudal, adukku yogyataiyillayaagil ennudaiyavan endru  
abhimaanippaanoru Śrivaishnavanudaiya abhimaanattile odungi  
vartittal seyyalaam."*

*"These were Rāmānuja's words..."*

*"If one becomes a prapanna, the journey of his soul (to salvation) is completely under the control of Bhagavān and he himself has nothing to do with it. All he has to do is to offer his self to Bhagavān, to whom verily the self belongs, nothing more! The state of the (mortal) body is completely dependent upon past Karmas; there is no need for anxiety (with respect to this).*

*If he continues to worry about it, then he is verily an atheist. With regard to this dual welfare (of the soul and the body), one has nothing to do. In that case, it may be asked whether a person can do whatever he wishes with his three faculties -mind, speech and body? Such action is, however, not in accordance with his essential nature. It is true that he has nothing more to do with respect to the means (Upaya), yet he should direct these (three faculties) in the rendering of servitude (Kainkaryam) which becomes the goal of his existence.*

*There are five kinds of service (Kainkaryam) he can render for the rest of his life. He may study the Śrī Bhāshyam and propagate it. If he is not capable of that, he may study the works of the Ājvārs and propagate them. If he is not capable of that, he can render service in one of the Divya Deshams by offering to the deity- food, lamp, flower garlands etc. If he is not competent to do that, he may chant the Dvayam and contemplate on its inner meanings. If he is not competent for that also, he may then seek the good-will of some Śree Vaishnava who is well disposed towards him and considers him as his own, and spend the rest of his lifetime in the shadow of such a great-soul."*

Having thus advised his disciples with the words of Rāmānuja, Vêdānta Deśika blessed them with his Śrīpāda Tirtha. The disciples considered themselves blessed. In order that the Archā of Lakshmi Hayagreeva received ceaseless daily worship and other such offerings, Deśika bestowed his foremost disciple Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar with that Archā Vighraha along with Shanka Chakra Mudras for the performance of Pancha Samskārās. He called upon Tirumalai Śrinivasāchārya and instructed him to carry out his task as Śrikārya Dhurandhara of the Perumāl Koil to the best of his abilities. According to the instructions of Udayavar, he appointed his son Varadāchārya to take his place as the Siddhānta Pravartaka of the Rāmānuja Matham. He also gave son Varadāchārya his personal deity of Lord Varadarāja for the continuation of daily Tiruvārāadhanam. The three foremost disciples of Vêdānta Deśika then recited the following laudatory verses on him.

Varadāchārya:

रविसदृशतनुः श्रीवेङ्कटाचार्यपादः  
 करकलितपवित्रः सूतरीयस्वभावः ।  
 सरसिजमणिमालां ऊर्ध्वपुण्ड्रान् दधानो  
 मम मनसि विभाते सन्ततं सन्निधत्ताम् ॥  
 ravisadr̥śatanuḥ śrīvēṅkaṭācāryapādaḥ  
 karakalitapavitraḥ sūtariyasvabhāvaḥ .  
 sarasijamaṇimālāṃ ūrdhvapuṇḍrān dadhānō  
 mama manasi vibhātē santatam sannidhattām ..

*"Let the lotus feet of Śrī Vêdānta Deśika,  
 who possesses a brilliant body shining with  
 the effulgence of a thousand suns, whose hands  
 are adorned with the 'Pavitra', whose neck is  
 bedecked with a garland of lotus beads, and  
 upper body with the white garment, who sports  
 the Urdhva Pundaras; forever reside in my mind!"*

नमो वेदान्त गुरवे नमो भूयो नमो नमः ।

सञ्जीवनाय सर्वेषां येन न्यासः प्रकाशितः ॥

namō vēdānta guravē namō bhūyō namō namaḥ .

sañjīvanāya sarvēṣāṃ yēna nyāsaḥ prakāśitaḥ ..

*"I bow to Vēdānta Deśika! I bow down again and again!  
I repeatedly bow to him who taught the 'Nyāsa Vidya'  
for the purpose of enlivening everyone!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar:

नमः पदमिदं भूयात् तस्मै वेङ्कटसूरये ।

यद्वागमृतसेकेन सञ्जीवितं इदं जगत् ॥

namaḥ padamidaṃ bhūyāt tasmai vēṅkaṭasūrayē .

yadvāgamṛtasēkēna sañjīvitam idaṃ jagat ..

*"I bow again and again to the feet of this Vēnkata Sūri, the profuse  
drizzle of whose nectarine speech enlivened this mortal world!"*

भगवन्तमिवानन्तकल्याणगुणसागरं ।

वेदान्तदेशिकं नौमि वेङ्कटेशगुरुत्तमम् ॥

bhagavantamivānantakalyāṇaḡuṇasāḡaram .

vēdāntadēśikaṃ naumi vēṅkaṭēśaḡurūttamam ..

*"I worship Vēdānta Deśika, the most excellent preceptor  
named Vēnkatesha, who is an ocean of numerous  
auspicious qualities, verily like the Lord Himself!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Tirumalai Śrinivasāchārya:

वेदान्तदेशिकपदाम्बुजमेव नित्यं  
मदैवतं किमपि काङ्क्षितसर्वदायि ।  
यद्वैभवस्य लवलेशविचिन्तनेन  
बुद्धिः प्रसीदति विभूतियुगावलम्बा ॥

vēdāntadēśikapadāmbujamēva nityam  
maddaivatam kimapi kāṅkṣitasarvadāyi ..  
yadvaibhavasya lavalēśavicintanēna  
buddhiḥ prasīdati vibhūtiyugāvalambā .

*"The lotus feet of Vēdānta Deśika, are capable of granting whatever we desire, and they are verily my eternal God! Meditating upon even but a small aspect of the limitless glory of his lotus feet renders the mind to become clear, tranquil and fit (for the performance of servitude) in the two vibhuti's- Leela vibhuti and Nitya vibhuti!"*

श्रीमद्वेङ्कटनाथार्याद् वेदान्ताचार्यवर्यतः ।  
न मे गतिर्भवेदन्या जन्मजन्मान्तरेष्वपि ॥

śrīmadvēṅkaṭanāthāryād vēdāntācāryavaryataḥ .  
na mē gatirbhavēdanyā janmajanmāntarēṣvapi ..

*"Birth after birth, to me, there is no other refuge than Śrīmad Venkatanāthā who is the revered Vēdānta Deśika!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Following the praise of their beloved Âchārya, the disciples of Vēdānta Deśika began chanting the verses of the Upanishads, and the verses of Tiruvaimoḷi. Placing his feet on the lap of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, his head on the lap of Kumāra Varadāchārya, and resting his mind on the twin feet of his Âchārya

Kidāmbi Appullār, Vêdānta Deśika left his mortal body to attain Vaikuntam, the abode of Perumāl! Vêdānta Deśika had left his mortal body in his residence on the Vadakku Tiruveedhi that leads to the Tāyār Sannidhi at Śrīrangam!

Overcome by the loss, the disciples of Vêdānta Deśika were plunged in extreme grief and shock. Beholding the sacred Tirumeni (divine body) of Vêdānta Deśika, Kumāra Varadāchārya composed the following Charama Śloka:

कवितार्किकसिंहाय कल्याणगुणशालिने ।

श्रीमते वेङ्कटेशाय वेदान्तगुरवे नमः ॥

kavitārkika siṃhāya kalyāṇaguṇaśālīnē ,  
śrīmatē vēṅkaṭēśāya vēdāntaguravē namaḥ ..

*"I worship Vêdānta Deśika, the lion among poets and logicians, the one endowed with auspicious qualities, and who was verily Lord Vēṅkatesha Himself!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Varadāchārya then performed the necessary rites such as Śrichoorna Paripalanam and Brahma Medha Kainkaryam.

The ascent of Vêdānta Deśika to Parama Padam has thus been recorded:

अब्धे सौम्ये च वारे गतवति तरणौ वृश्चिकं कृत्तिकर्क्षे  
राकायां वेङ्कटेशो यतिनृपतिमतं सर्वतः स्थापयित्वा ।

वेदान्ताचार्यवर्यो विरचितविविधानेकदिव्यप्रबन्धः

श्रीशैलाधीशघण्टाकृतिवपुरभवदेशिकेन्द्रो दयालुः ॥

abdhē saumyē ca vārē gatavati taraṇau vṛścikaṃ kṛttikarkṣē .  
rākāyāṃ vēṅkaṭēśō yatinṛpatimatam sarvataḥ sthāpayitvā ..

vēdāntācāryavyayō viracitavividhānēkadivyaṇṇabandhaḥ .  
śrīśailādhiśaghaṇṭākṛtīvapurabhavaddēśikēndrō dayāluḥ ..

*"The all-compassionate Vēdānta Āchārya verily merged  
into the bell of Śrī Vēnkatesha, on the Shukla Paksha  
Poornami day under the asterism of Krittika, solar  
month of Vrischika, of the year Saumya; having  
composed numerous invaluable works for the sake of  
establishing the Rāmānuja Matham in all directions!"*

श्रीधीयोग्ये शके शुक्ले उदभूत् वेङ्कटेश्वरः ।  
लब्धप्राये शके प्रायात् सौम्ये स परमं पदम् ॥  
śrīdhīyōgyē śakē śuklē udabhūt vēṇkaṭēśvaraḥ .  
labdhapṛāyē śakē pṛāyāt saumyē sa paramaṇṇ padam ..

*"In the year of Shukla was born Guru Vēnkateshwara.  
In the year of Saumya, after living for one-hundred  
years, he attained Parama Padam!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

**A prophecy comes true:**

प्रतिष्ठापितवेदान्तः प्रतिक्षिप्तबहिर्मतः ।  
भूयास्त्रैविद्यमान्यस्त्वं भूरिकल्याणभाजनम् ॥  
pratiṣṭhāpitavēdāntaḥ pratikṣiptabahirmataḥ .  
bhūyāstraividyamānyastvaṇṇ bhūrikalyāṇa bhājanam ..

*"May you establish the Vēdānta by refuting the opposing doctrines,  
may you become the object of veneration of those who are well versed  
in the Vēdā, may you be the recipient of all that is auspicious!"*

- Source: Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

True to the above blessings of Śrī Nadādur Ammāl, the life of Vêdānta Deśika was a prophecy unfolded! Through the glorious one hundred years that Śrī Vênkatanātha lived on this earth, he had incessantly worked to re-establish the doctrine of Vêdānta on a firm footing. He elucidated the doctrine of Rāmānuja in a clear, authentic and flawless manner. Even as Nadādur Ammāl had compassionately blessed him saying, '*Pratishhtaapita Vêdāntaha*', Deśika went on to become the establisher of not one but of two Vêdānta - the '*dual Vêdānta*'! While Ammāl had blessed him to be the '*Vêdānta Prathistaapaka*', Deśika earned that very title of '*Vêdāntāchārya*' i.e., '*the preceptor of (dual) Vêdānta*' from none other than Periya Perumāl Lord Ranganātha Himself! What the Âchārya (Ammāl) wished for his disciple (Deśika), was indeed bestowed by the Supreme Lord (Periya Perumāl) Himself- such is the glory of the compassion of an Âchārya! Deśika was a master of all arts, so much so that the Supreme mother of the three worlds, Goddess Lakshmi Herself bestowed upon him the title of '*Sarva Tanta Swatantra*'! Deśika thus had the unique honor of being bestowed the two honorary titles from the divine couple Śrīman Nārāyana! His complete mastery even over the doctrines opposing the school of Rāmānuja made him adept at facing any challenge whatsoever. He had won innumerable debates with scholars of the opposing schools with much ease. The title of '*Kavi Taarkika Kesari*' meaning '*Lion among poets and debaters*' was given to him by none other than Śrī Sudarshana Sūri, the direct disciple of Nadādur Ammāl and other senior most Śrīe Vaishnava scholars of that time. Among those who are well versed in the Vêdā, irrespective of the tradition they may belong to, Vêdānta Deśika is revered with utmost respect. He was the epitome of noble virtues. Purity, wisdom, foresightedness, erudition, scholarliness, equanimity, dispassion, fortitude, peacefulness, enlightenment, non-injury, compassion, complete freedom from pride or arrogance, humility, courage, the ability to endure evilness, conviction to stand up for the truth, unmatched devotion to the Supreme Person and

above all, total adoration for Âchârya Rāmānuja; these were only a few of the gracious qualities belonging to Thooppul Vēnkatanātha! In summary, the wish of Nadādur Ammāl was verily fulfilled!

Kumāra Varadāchārya, the son of Vêdānta Deśika, refers to this very fact in his work Vêdānta Deśika Mangalāshasanam.

यो बाल्ये वरदार्यस्य प्राचार्यस्य परां दयाम् ।  
 अवाप्य वृद्धिगमितः तस्मै योग्याय मङ्गळम् ॥  
 yō bālyē varadāryasya prācāryasya parāṃ dayām .  
 avāpya vṛddhiṅgamiṭaḥ tasmai yōgyāya maṅgaḷam ..

*"Benedictions to him, who received during childhood, the boundless grace of Prāchārya Varada Guru and thereby attained prosperity!"*

-Vêdānta Deśika Mangalam 6

It is apt to summarize here the achievements of Vêdānta Deśika as described in his own words:

अस्ति खलु समस्तलोकसंभावनीयस्य विश्वातिशायिनो  
 विश्वामित्रगोत्रभूषणस्य विशुद्धविद्याविहारपुण्डरीकस्य  
 पुण्डरीकाक्षसोमसुत्संभवस्यानन्तगुणशेवधेरनन्तसूरेरात्मसंभवः

श्रीरङ्गराजदिव्याज्ञालब्धवेदान्ताचार्यपदः

कवितार्किकसिंह इति प्रख्यातगुणसमाख्यः छात्रजन  
 निबद्धजैत्रध्वजप्रसाधितदशदिशासौधः सर्वतन्त्रसङ्कट  
 प्रशमनविशङ्कटमतिः श्रीमद्वेङ्कटनाथो नाम कविः ॥

asti khalu samastalōkasambhāvanīyasya viśvātiśāyinō  
 viśvāmitragōtrabhūṣaṇasya viśuddhavidyāvihārapuṇḍarīkasya  
 puṇḍarīkākṣasōmasutsambhavasānantaḡuṇaśēvadhēranantasūrērāt  
 masambhavaḥ śrīraṅgarājadivyañjñālabdhavēdāntācāryapadaḥ

kavitārkikasiṃha iti prakhyātaguṇasamākhyahchātrajana  
nibaddhajaitradhvajaprasādhitadaśadiśāsaudhaḥ sarvatantrasaṅkaṭa  
praśamanaviśaṅkaṭamatih śrīmadvēṅkaṭanāthō nāma kaviḥ ..

*“There is a poet by the name of Śrī Vēṅkatanātha, the son of Anantha Sūri the treasure of innumerable virtues, and who himself was the son of Pundarikāksha who performed the Soma Yagna, whose lotus heart took deep delight in the study of the scriptures and was respected by the whole world as an ornament for the gotra of Vishwamitra! This poet Vēṅkatanātha was blessed with the title of ‘Vedāntāchārya’ by the divine command of Lord Ranganātha, and is renowned as the ‘lion among logicians and poets’, owing to him possessing numerous noble qualities, and his greatly endowed mind being capable of resolving the perplexity in all arts and sciences! The ten directions are verily like mansions atop which the banner of victory planted by his disciples are waving proudly!”*

-Sankalpa Suryodaya, text between Verse 11 and 12

### Consecration of the deity of Vêdānta Deśika at Śrirangam:

In accordance with the wishes of Śrī Ranganāyaki Tāyār and Periya Perumāl, Nainār Āchārya and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar then installed a beautiful Archā Vighraha of Vêdānta Deśika directly opposite to the Tāyār Sannidhi (sanctum of Ranganāyaki Nāchiyār). Vêdānta Deśika had performed Siddhānta Pravachanam and Kālakshepam on the Śrī Bhāshya and Bhagavad Vishayam numerous times at that very spot, over the many years of his illustrious life as an Ubhaya Vedāntāchārya!

रथाङ्गजलजाङ्कितः सुललितोर्ध्वपुण्ड्रोज्ज्वलः

सरोजतुलसीमणिग्रथितमालिकाभूषणः ।

सितांशुकयुगाञ्चितः स्मितमुखो दयाशीतलः

चकास्तु हृदि मे सदा स गुरुवेङ्कटाधीश्वरः ॥

rathāṅgajalajāṅkitaḥ sulalitōrdhvaṇḍrōjjvalaḥ  
sarōjatulasīmaṇigrathitamālikābhūṣaṇaḥ  
sitāṃśukayugāñcitaḥ smitamukhō dayāśītalaḥ  
cakāstu hṛti mē sadā sa guruvēṅkaṭādhīśvaraḥ ..

*"Adorned with the marks of the discus and conch, radiant with the beautiful Urdhva Pundara, decked with the Tulasi and Saroja Mālā, wearing the bright white garments, with a countenance casting a pleasing and benevolent smile; may this handsome appearance of Guru Vēṅkatādīhswara forever illumine my heart!"*

-Śrī Vēdānta Deśika Vighraha Dhyānam, 14

**Deśika Sampradāyam:**

नान्यं मन्ये गुरुश्रेष्ठं श्रीमद्वेदान्तदेशिकात् ।

तत्संप्रदायिधन्येभ्यो नान्यान् धन्यांश्च सज्जनान् ॥

nānyaṃ manyē gurusrēṣṭhaṃ śrīmadvēdāntadēśikāt .

tatsampradāyidhanyēbhyō nānyān dhanyāṃśca sajjanān .

*"We do not think of any excellent Guru other than Vēdānta Deśika!  
The followers of his Saprādāyam are blessed! Among  
the virtuous, there is no one else who are thus fortunate!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Swāmi Vēdānta Deśika took birth in this mortal world at a critical juncture. The peaceful continued practice of the doctrine of 'Sanātana Dharma' was being threatened by hostile forces. Temples and such other places of worship were being destroyed and plundered in ensuing invasions by foreign military campaigns. The system of Vēdānta faced a constant challenge from the growth of philosophies antagonistic to it. New doctrines, those that were non-

existant at a time when Śrī Rāmānuja systematized the ancient philosophy, had now emerged. The Śree Vaishnava doctrine of Rāmānuja had to be protected from dissident forces both internal and external to it. On many occasions the doctrine of Ubhaya Vêdānta, which placed the Sanskrit Vêdās and Tamil Prabandhams on equal footing, became challenged. The validity of the worship of Āḷvārs in temples became questioned. There was also a situation wherein an important and priceless work such as the the Śrūta Prakāshika faced the possibility of being lost forever!

And then, there was another factor. Although the same doctrinal tenets as propounded by Rāmānuja were being followed by all the preceptors of this system who came after him, there arose subtle differences in the interpretation of certain aspects. This was the result of only a variation in construal of utterances and sentences. It became important to prove that these differences in interpretation did not amount to differences in the very fundamental concepts of the Rāmānuja Siddhāntam.

At such a juncture therefore, Lord Vêṅkatêshwara decided to intervene! The timing of the descent of Swami Vêdānta Deśika is beautifully indicated in the below verse:

वेदे संजातखेदे मुनिजनवचने प्राप्तनित्यावमाने  
 संकीर्णे सर्ववर्णे सति तदनुगुणे निष्प्रमाणे पुराणे ।  
 मायावादे समोदे कलिकलुषवशाच्छून्यवादे विवादे  
 धर्मत्राणाय यो भूत् स जयति भगवान् विष्णुघण्टावतारः ॥  
 vēdē sañjātakhēdē munijanavacanē prāptanityāvamānē  
 saṅkīrṇē sarvavarṇē sati tadanugunē niṣpramāṇē purāṇē .  
 māyāvādē samōdē kalikaluṣavaśācchūnyavādē vivādē  
 dharmatrāṇāya yō bhūt sa jayati bhagavān viṣṇughanṭāvatārah ..

*“Owing to the impurity of Kali, the Vêdās were in distress; the words of great sages incurred contempt; there was an admixture of all castes; the Purānās lost their authority; the doctrine of Māyāvāda shone in all delight; and Śūnyavāda was accepted in an undisputed manner! Victory to the incarnation of Lord Vishnu’s bell, who was born at that juncture in order to protect and preserve (eternal) Dharma!”*

Faced with numerous challenges, Vêdānta Deśika played a pivotal role in re-establishing the doctrine of Rāmānuja during such troubled times. In order to clarify the subtle and fundamental concepts of Rāmānuja Siddhāntam, to place them on a firm footing by showing the relevant scriptural sanction, and to reconcile the same philosophy as previously taught by Rāmānuja, Vêdānta Deśika composed numerous works and held innumerable Kālakshepams (discourses). In doing so, Deśika also defended the doctrine of Rāmānuja from the fresh wave of counter-attacks of rival schools of thought, old and new.

सर्वोज्जीवनचिन्तया घटकताभावेन दानात्कृति  
श्रेष्ठानां बहुशस्तदुद्धरणतस्त्रय्यन्तसंरक्षणात् ।  
श्रीमच्छ्रीशठकोपमुख्यदिविषन्नाथार्यरामानुजाचार्यान्  
अप्यनुयाति हन्त निगमान्ताचार्यचूडामणिः ॥

sarvōjjīvanacintayā ghaṭakatābhāvēṇa dānātkṛti  
śrēṣṭhānāṃ bahuśastaduddharaṇatastrayyantasamrakṣaṇāt .  
śrīmacchriṣaṭhakōpamukhyadiviṣannāthāryarāmānujācāryān  
apyanuyāti hanta nigamāntācāryacūḍāmaṇiḥ ..

*“Behold! For the upliftment and emancipation of every soul in this world and to help them attain the Supreme Lord, for the purpose of well-protecting the doctrine of Vêdānta (from the onslaught of opposing schools), in order to help us follow the path shown by Divya Suris such as Śrī Satakopa, Śrī Nāthamuni, Śrī Rāmānujācharya and others, Swami Vêdānta Deśika has authored innumerable and pre-eminent works of highest excellence!”*

-Saptati Ratna Mālīka; Verse 30

Swāmi Deśika re-established the authority of the Āḷvārs and their works. He re-consecrated their images within temples, just as Nāthamuni and Rāmānuja had previously. He revived the practice of rendering the Tamil Prabandhams in temples, and also the celebration of Adhyayanotsavam at Śrīrangam.

To honor the fulfillment of all these noble deeds, the doctrine of Rāmānuja as taught and explained by Vêdānta Deśika now became called Deśika Sampradāyam! It is important to note however that the teachings of Vêdānta Deśika are verily the same teachings that were propounded earlier by Rāmānuja. Deśika did not propound anything new, rather he strengthened the doctrine of Rāmānuja by re-establishing it; and he further elaborated upon some subtle aspects of the doctrine by clarifying issues that had become subject to a variation of interpretation.

The doctrine of Vêdānta was first taught to Lord Brahma by the foremost preceptor, Lord Hayagreeva. That embodiment of the Vêdās, Lord Hayagreeva then adorns the lotus seat in the hearts of the Āḷvārs and Āchāryas and through them teaches the very same doctrine of Vêdānta that He taught Brahma in the days of yore.

हृद्याहृत्पद्मसिंहासनरसिकहयग्रीवहेशोर्मिघोष  
क्षिप्तप्रत्यर्थिदृष्टिर्जयति बहुगुणापङ्क्तिरस्मद्गुरूणाम् ।  
दिवसौधाबद्धजैत्रध्वजपटपवनस्फातिनिर्धूततत्त-  
-त्सिद्धान्तस्तोमतूलस्तबकविगमनव्यक्तसद्वर्तनीका ॥

hṛdyāhṛtpadmasiṃhāsanasarikahayagrīvahēṣōrmighōṣa  
kṣiptapratyarthidṛṣṭirjayati bahugunāpaṅkitirasmadgurūṇām .  
diksaudhābaddhajaitradhvajapaṭapavanasphātinirdhūtatatta  
tsiddhāntastōmatūlastabakavigamanavyaktasadvartanīkā ..

*"Victorious is the glorious lineage of our Gurus who possess numerous auspicious qualities; who have abolished the pride*

*of the upholders of opposing doctrines by the resounding note of the neighs issuing forth verily from Lord Hayagreeva who delights in adorning the lotus throne of their hearts; and whose victory banner fixed atop the mansions in the four quarters have, by means of their prosperous flutter in the winds, dispelled the various opposing doctrines like tufts of cotton, and have thereby made the clear good path evident to all!"*

- Rahasya Traya Sāram

That Lord Hayagreeva again re-established the very same doctrine through Vêdānta Deśika. Swami Deśika himself says:

வெள்ளைப் பரிமுகர் தேசிகராய் \* விரகால் அடியோம்\*  
உள்ளத்தெழுதியதோலையில் இட்டனம் \* யாம் இதற்கென்  
கொள்ளத் துணியினும் கோதென்றிகழினும் \* கூர் மதியீர்\*  
எள்ளத்தனையுகவாதிகழாது\* எம்மெழில் மதியே

vellaip parimukar tēcikaṛāy - virakāl aṭiyōm  
uḷḷatteḷutiyatōlaiyil iṭṭanam - yām itarḱen  
koḷḷat tuṇiyiṇum kōtenṛikazinūm - kūṛ matiyīr  
eḷḷattanaṇaiyukavāṭikazātu emmezil matiyē

*"The Lord with the countenance of a white horse assumed the form of my Āchārya and through the means of instruction, wrote these truths in my mind! I have only transcribed those very truths on these leaves, and the role played by me is nothing else! O men of critical minds, whether this treatise is accepted as worthy or rejected as unworthy, my clear mind will neither feel elated nor dejected!"*

- Rahasya Traya Sāram

Therefore, the works authored by Swami Deśika are the 'Vāk Amrutha Prasādam' of Lord Hayagreeva, i.e. verily 'the blessing of Lord Hayagreeva's nectarine speech'!

संसाराटोपतापक्षपणनिपुणवाग्धोराणीसारणीश्रीः  
वाणीसंपूज्यपादादिमतुरगमहामन्दुराऽऽनन्दराशिः ।  
संख्यातीतप्रबन्धप्रशमितविमतव्रातशङ्काकलङ्को  
मोदान्वेदान्तसूरिर्दिशतु गुरुवरस्सर्वतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रः

samsārātōpatāpakṣapaṇanipuṇavāgdhōraṇīsāraṇīśrīḥ  
vāṇīsampūjyapādādimaturagamahāmandurā"nandarāśiḥ .  
saṅkhyātītaprabandhapraśamitavimatavrātaśaṅkākalāṅkō  
mōdānvēdāntasūrirīśatu guruvarassarvatanttrasvatantraḥ

*"The one who is adept at destroying the afflictions of the endless samsara, who is verily endowed with an uninterrupted stream of 'Vak' by the grace of that foremost Lord Hayagreeva- the abode of bliss, whose feet are worshipped by Goddess Saraswathi and Goddess Lakshmi; who by composing innumerable works quelled the blemishes and uncertainties arising from the multitude of opposing doctrines, that Guru Vēdānta Suri who is a master of all arts 'Sarva Tantra Swatantra', may he grant us happiness!"*

-Granthopasamhāra of the Alankāramanihāra

The Deśika Sampradāyam is therefore non-different from the doctrine of Rāmānuja- i.e. Rāmānuja Siddhānta, Emperumānār Darshana or Ubhaya Vēdānta Siddhānta. Yet, it is called as Deśika Sampradāyam in order to express gratitude to Swāmi Vēdānta Deśika who re-established the same tenets at a later time.

The doctrine of Vēdānta as taught by Śrīman Nārāyana is called Vēdānta Siddhānta or Veda Marga (the path of the Vēdā). It is what is also referred to as 'Sanātana Dharma' or 'eternal doctrine'. This

Vêdânta Siddhânta together with the same doctrinal tenets as taught by the Âļvârs through the Tamil Divya Prabandham became called as Ubhaya Vêdânta. When Rāmānuja reconciled this very doctrine of Ubhaya Vêdânta, it became called as Rāmānuja Siddhânta or Emperumānār Darshanam. Then again, when Vêdânta Deśika reconciled the same doctrine of Rāmānuja, it became called Deśika Sampradāyam. All these doctrines are therefore essentially and fundamentally non-different! Only a fortunate soul would embrace the right path shown by our Âchāryas and is thereby able to attain the ultimate goal. Those who fail to adopt this path remain afflicted by the sorrows of Samsāra. In fact, Swāmi Vêdânta Deśika has himself indicated the efficacy of seeking refuge through this immaculate unbroken tradition:

अस्मद्देशिकसंप्रदायरहितैरद्यापि नालक्षितैः ।

asmaddēśikasampradāyarahitairadyāpi nālakṣitaiḥ

*"Those who are deprived of the Sampradāya of my Âchārya, they are verily incapable of reaching the ultimate goal!"*

- Siddhopāya Shodanādhikāram, Rahasya Traya Sāram

Śri Prativādi Bhayankaram Annan also expresses a similar opinion in his eulogy on Swāmi Deśika. In fact, he submitted this work-Saptati Ratna Mālīka as an offering to Lord Ranganātha, thereby declaring the authoritative nature of the work. This indicates the authenticity of the facts mentioned therein!

गुरौ वादिहंसाम्बुदाचार्यशिष्ये

जनाः भक्तिहीनाः यतीन्द्राप्रियास्युः ।

यतीन्द्राप्रियाः विष्णुकारुण्यदूराः

कुतो मुक्तिवार्ता हि तादृग्विधानाम् ॥

gurai vādihaṃsāmbudācāryaśiṣyē .  
 janāḥ bhaktihīnāḥ yatīndrāpriyāsyuḥ  
 yatīndrāpriyāḥ viṣṇukāruṇyadūrāḥ  
 kutō muktivārtā gi tādr̥gvidhānām ..

*"Those who are devoid of devotion towards Vēdānta Deśika, the disciple of Guru Vādi Hamsāmbudha, they are verily excluded from being dear to Yatirāja! If they are not dear to Yatirāja, they become ineligible for the compassion of Lord Vishnu! In such a situation, the question of liberation does not arise at all!"*

-Saptati Ratna Mālīka; 55

The following excellent sloka captures, in a gist, the great contribution of Śrī Vēdānta Deśika to the doctrine of Rāmānuja.

श्रीमद्रामानुजार्यैस्वहृदय-कवटे क्षेत्र-सारे समुप्तान्  
 सारान् सिद्धान्तशालीन् श्रुतिमकुटगुरु सूक्तिनीराभिषेकैः  
 संवर्ध्म स्फारयुक्तिव्रतति वृतिगणैदुष्प्रवेशान् परेषां  
 यो रक्षत्यार्द्रचित्तो निरवधिदयया तं विना कं भजामि ॥

śrīmadrāmānujāryaisvahr̥dayakavaṭēkṣētrasārē samuptān  
 sārān siddhāntaśālīn śrutimakuṭagurusūktinīrābhiṣēkaiḥ  
 samvardhya sphārayuktivratativṛtiganaiduṣpravēśān parēśān  
 yō rakṣatyārdracittō niravadhidayayā taṃ vinā kaṃ bhajāmi ..

*"Having planted the rich seeds of the quintessential doctrinal tenets that verily originated from the depths of the heart of Rāmānuja, Śrī Vēdānta Deśika profusely showered upon them the water of his Śrī-sooktis (divine works). Having grown them abundantly, he covered them with the creepers of his yukti's (authoritative proofs) so that they are inaccessible to the opponents. Out of limitless mercy, he always contemplated on protecting this crop. If not for this Vēdānta Deśika, whom else to worship?\**

\*The primary source of this Sloka is not known, however it has been collected from the archives of the Parakāla Matham Library. This verse is said to have been composed during one of the 'Vidwat Sadas' held at Parakāla Matham. The composer is unknown.

## Nainār Âchārya and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar:

After the ascent of Vêdānta Deśika to Parama Padam, his disciples resorted to the feet of Nainār Âchārya and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar- who were verily the two sons of Vêdānta Deśika. While Nainār Âchārya was Deśika's own progeny, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar was Deśika's own 'Jnāna Putra' or 'spiritual' son.

These two pre-eminent Âchāryas then carried forward the noble deed of propogating the doctrine of Rāmānuja according to the teachings of Vêdānta Deśika.

They continued to reside at Śrirangam for a period of one year, during which they ensured the conduct of appropriate worship at the shrine of Lord Ranganātha. During this time, they also taught the works of Vêdānta Deśika to numerous other deserving disciples. Tirumalai Śrinivasāchārya, according to the instructions of Deśika, returned to Perumāl Koil at Kanchi to ensure the smooth conduct of worship there.

Nainār Âchārya then decided to spread the message of Rāmānuja throughout the various parts of the country. Obtaining the consent of Lord Periya Perumāl, Nainār Âchārya along with Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and other disciples set forth on a tour of various Divya Kshetras. It was at this time that a local ruler by the name of Singappa Nayaka, the son of Maadhava Nayaka, extended honors to Nainār Âchārya and other disciples of Vêdānta Deśika. It is important to mention here that several years prior to this; Deśika had composed the works of Shubashitānivi and Rahasya Sandesham for the benefit of Singappa Nayaka. This Singappa Nayaka, who had resorted to the feet of Vêdānta Deśika, was the ruler of Rajamahendrapattanam (current town of Rajahmundry) along the banks of the river Godavari. Out of respect for the son of Vêdānta Deśika, Singappan sent forth decorated palanquins, wealth and other due honors to welcome Nainār Âchārya and the retinue of disciples.

The following excellent sloka describes the glorious assemblage of the chief disciples of Deśika- beginning with Nainār Âchārya, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and other such illustrious scholars:

श्रीमद्रामानुजार्यप्रकटितपदवीधाविमेधाविविद्वत्-  
-सेनानासीरवीरो वरदगुरुरहं वादिनो वारयन्तु ।  
आलोकालोकशैलादखिलनरपतिद्वारिबध्नामि पत्रं  
मायासिद्धान्तमायाविघटितघटनायन्त्रमन्त्रस्वतन्त्रः ॥

śrīmadrāmānujāryaprakaṭītapadavīdhāvimēdhāvividvat-  
-sēnānāsīravīrō varadagururahaṃ vādinō vārayantu .  
ālōkālōkaśailādakhilānarapatidvāribadhnāmi patraṃ  
māyāsiddhāntamāyāvighaṭītaghaṭanāyantramāntrasvatantraḥ ..

*"O debators, stay away! I am that eminent Varada Guru, who is the frontline commander of a great army of profound intellectual scholars who tread the pure path shown by Śrīmad Rāmānujācharya! I have fastened this letter at the door of various great Kings of this world all the way even upto the summit of the Lokāloka mountain, stating that this army is indeed adept in the use of Yāntras and Māntras required for completely severing the deception of Māyavāda!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Having accepted the honors bestowed by Singappa Nāyaka, Nainār Âchārya and other disciples visited several places before turning southwards to the town of Gangai Konda Chola Puram. The local ruler of this city also honored them and sought refuge at the feet of Nainār Âchārya.

Proceeding then to the temple of Tiru Tanjai Māmani Koil, Nainār Âchārya and other disciples sought the blessings of Neelamegha Perumāl. It was here that a Śree Vaishnava approached Nainār Âchārya and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar with an issue. This devout Śree Vaishnava was faced with the loss of a member of his

family in the time interval between Tiru Kārtikai Tirunāl Poornima of the Kartika month and the commencement of the Tiru Adhyayana festival which is carried out during the Dhanur Māsam. This period is considered as a period of 'non-study' or 'anadhyayana'. Being unsure if it would be appropriate to conduct the twelfth day purificatory ceremonies for his departed relative by recitation of the Divya Prabandhās during this period, the Śree Vaishnava approached the two chief disciples of Vēdānta Deśika.

Nainār Âchārya and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar together deliberated upon this matter. After much consideration, they came to the conclusion that the purificatory recitation of the Divya Prabandhās can indeed be completed during this time interval by substituting it with the chanting of Nālāyiraraprabandha Taniyans according to the instructions of Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān, followed by the recitation of the Prabandhās of Deśika.

The chanting of the Prabandhās of Deśika (four hundred and fifty four Tamil verses composed by Deśika over twenty four Prabandha works) was quite a task given that these verses were dispersed within the lengthy texts of his various works. Therefore, Nainār Âchārya and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar classified the works of Deśika under several subcategories for ease of access. These two chief disciples also ensured that all the works of Swāmi Deśika were engraved onto 'Pattolai' and preserved for posterity. Further, they expressed the opinion that during all twelfth day funeral ceremonies conducted in Śree Vaishnava homes henceforth, the recitation of the Divya Prabandha must be accompanied by the recitation of the Deśika Prabandhās as well.

Having thus classified the works of Vēdānta Deśika and sorting his Tamil Prabandhams from various works, Nainār Âchārya composed a work called Pillai Andādi comprising of twenty stanzas in praise of his father and preceptor Vēdānta Deśika. Just as Madhurakavi Âlvār composed the 'Kanninum Siruttāmbu' on his Âchārya, and Tiru Arangathu Amudanar composed the 'Nurtandādi' on his

Âchārya Rāmānuja, Nainār Âchārya paid his tributes to Vêdānta Deśika in the 'Pillai Andādi'. At the sanctum of the Tiru Tanjai Māmani Koil, Nainār Âchārya and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar recited, for the very first time, the Nālāyira Divya Prabandham Taniyans and the Rāmānuja Nurtandādi followed by the Deśika Prabandhams. They concluded the session with the recitation of the Pillai Andādi. By the grace of Neela Megha Perumāl, Nainār Âchārya and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar collectively ordained that thenceforth the recitation of Divya Prabandhams, at all Divya Kshetras and all Śree Vaishnava homes, must include the recital of the Deśika Prabandhams and also the Pillai Andādi. As a token of gratitude to the great Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar also introduced the practice of offering 'Sambhāvana' (respectful honors) to him at the end of the recitation, along with similar honors to Âḷvārs and other Âchāryas. Marking the beginning of this great tradition of 'Âḷvār-Âchārya Sambhāvana', Nainār Âchārya and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar consecrated a Divya Mangala Archā Vighraha of Vêdānta Deśika at the Tiru Tanjai Māmani Koil!

परश्शतं वापि परस्सहस्रं श्रीवेङ्कटाचार्यकृताः प्रबन्धाः ।

तत्रालमेकः खलु भुक्तिमुक्त्योः कार्त्स्येन कस्तान् गणयेत्समस्तान् ॥

paraśśataṁ vāpi parassahasraṁ śrīvēṅkaṭācāryakṛtāḥ prabandhāḥ .  
tatrālamēkaḥ khalu bhuktimuktyōḥ kārtsyēna kastān gaṇayētsamastān .

*"The works of Vêdānta Deśika may number a hundred or well may be a thousand! Who indeed is capable of enumerating the entirety of his works? Yet, understanding even one among them is sufficient for conferring the enjoyments of this world and also ultimate Moksha!"*

-Saptati Ratna Mālīka; 20

## Consecration of Vêdânta Deśika Archā Vighram at various Divya Kshetra:

The consecration of the Archā of Vêdânta Deśika at Śrīrangam according to the wishes expressed by Śrī Ranganāyaki Tāyār and Periya Perumāl was the first in the series of such consecrations undertaken by Nainār Âchārya and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar. The next was at the Tiru Tanjai Māmani Koil, marking the formulation of the prescribed method of reciting the Divya Prabandhās. From here, Nainār Âchārya and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar proceeded to Tirukkottiyur and then to Azagar Koil in Tirumālirunjolai (near Madurai), and installed Archā Vighra of Deśika at both places. Hearing then that certain evil minded people at Madurai had opposed the 'Paratattva Nirnayotsavam' celebrating the victory of Periyālvār, Nainār Âchārya and Jīyar hastily arrived there. Establishing the importance of that Utsava, they installed the Archā of Vêdânta Deśika and ensured unimpeded conduct of the festivities. They also travelled further south to Śrīvilliputtur and Âlvār Tirunagari and consecrated Deśika vighrams there.

Having toured through the kingdom of Kerala, they eventually arrived at Tirunārāyanapuram. They recalled the days when Vêdânta Deśika, pleased with the benevolence of Yatirāja, taught Nainār Âchārya the Divya Prabandham. Prostrating to the feet of Udayavar, Yadugiri Nāchīyār, Tiru Nārāyana and Chellappillai, they consecrated the Archā of Vêdânta Deśika there. They resided there for some time along with other disciples and performed Śrī Bhāshya Pravachanam. On the auspicious day of Phalguni Uttiram, while Perumāl and Nāchīyār were being offered Tirumanjanam together, Nainār Âchārya rendered the following verse:

என்னது யான் செய்கின்றேன் என்னாதாருக்கு  
இன்னடிமை தந்தளிப்பான் இமையோர் வாழும்  
பொன்னுலகில் திருவுடனே அமர்ந்த நாதன்  
புனலாரும் பொழிலரங்கன் திகழ மன்னித்

தன்னகலம் அகலாத தகவால் ஓங்கும்  
தகவுடனே தன் கருமம் தானே எண்ணி  
அன்னையென அடைக்கலம் கொண்டஞ்சல் தந்து – என்  
அழலாற நிழலாற அளிக்கின்றானே

ennatu yāṇ ceykinrēṇ enṇātārukku  
innaṭimai tantaliṇṇāṇ imaiyōr vāzum  
ponṇulakil tiruvuṭaṇē amarṇta nāṭaṇ  
puṇalārum poṇḷaraṇkaṇ tikaza manṇit  
tannakalam akalāta takavāl ōṅkum  
takavuṭaṇē taṇ karumam tāṇē eṇṇi  
annaṇiyēṇa āṭaikkalam koṇṭaṇcal tantu eṇ  
aḷalāra nīḷalāra aḷikkīṇṇāṇē

“ Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa who incessantly accepts servitude from the Nitya Suris at Vaikunta, in order to grant servitude to those people who seek Him without a sense of ‘I’ and ‘mine’, resides eternally at Śrīrangam! Owing to the fact that His divine consort, the embodiment of compassion, resides inseparably on His chest, His compassion keeps growing and ever growing! Possessing such abounding grace, He takes me into His refuge verily like a mother, and protects out of His own accord, offering abundant shade under His lotus feet so as to quell the scorching heat of Samsāra!”

- Śrī Deśika Prabandham, Amrutāsvādini; 9

Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar then rendered the following verse:

நின் அருளாம் கதியன்றி மற்றொன்றில்லேன்  
நெடுங்காலம் பிழை செய்த நிலை கழிந்தேன்  
உன்னருளுக்கினிதான நிலை உகந்தேன்  
உன் சரணே சரணென்னும் துணிவு பூண்டேன்  
மன்னிருளாய் நின்ற நிலை எனக்குத் தீர்த்து  
வானவர் தம் வாழ்ச்சிதர வரித்தேன் உன்னை  
இன்னருளான் இனி எனக்கோர் பரமேற்றாமல்  
என் திருமால் அடைக்கலம் கொள் என்னை நீயே.

niṇ aruḷām katiyaṇṇi marṇṇillēṇ  
 neṭuṇkālam piṇai ceṭṭa nilai kaṇṇintēṇ  
 unṇaruḷukkiṇitāṇa nilai ukantēṇ  
 un caraṇē caraṇennum tuṇivu pūṇatēṇ  
 manṇiruḷāy niṇṇa nilai eṇakkut tīrttu  
 vāṇavar tam vāṇccitara varittēṇ unṇai  
 inṇaruḷāl iṇi eṇakkōṇ paramēṇṇāmal  
 eṇ tirumāl aṭaikkalam koḷ enṇai nīyē

*"My dear Lord! I do not have any other means but Your abounding grace! I am now relieved of the numerous sins that I have accumulated from time immemorial. I have now resorted to the righteous path that stands along the lines of Your will! With unshakable faith, I have now surrendered to Your lotus feet accepting them as the ultimate refuge! The ignorance that has been with me from the very beginning has now been removed! I plead with You to bestow upon me a blissful state of servitude as enjoyed by the Nitya Suris! Showering Your grace upon me, leaving me with no other actions to perform, do treat me at once as an object that is Your own and is worthy of Your protection!"\**

- Śrī Deśika Prabandham, Amrutāsvādini; 39

Perumāl and Nāchiyār became much pleased with the rendition of the verses, which carried forth the essence of the Gadya Traya, on the Phalguni Uttiram Tirunāl. Through the agency of the priest, the Lord and His consort granted them any desired wish. "You have

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\* This verse carries forth the essence of 'Anga Panchaka Prapatti'. Line 1 denotes Kārpanyam, 2-3 denotes Prathikulya Varjanam, 4 denotes Anukulya Sankalpa, 5-6 Maha Vishvāsam, 7-8 Gopthrutva Varanam, and 9- 11 denote Ātma Samarpanam or Atma Raksha Bhāra Samarpanam!

rendered those compositions of our Vêdânta Deśika which reveal the essence of the truth contained in the Gadya Trayam, composed on this very sacred day! In return for this most pleasing service done to Us, what do you desire?" To this, the chief disciples of Deśika requested that the recitation of the verses of Deśika Prabandham, which contained within them the quintessential teachings of Yatirāja, be heard and blessed forever on the Phalguni Uttiram Tirunāl by the divine couple. Acknowledging the fact that the essence of the Tirumantra, the efficacy of Prapatti, the importance of Anga Panchaka Âtma Bhāra Samarpanam and the truth about the essential nature of the divine couple themselves were indeed contained within these verses of Deśika Prabandham; the Lord and his Consort instructed the Arayar to recite these verses. Overjoyed by the recitation of these beautiful verses, the divine couple felt that all their wishes had come to fruition. The divine garlands were then bestowed upon Arayar who recited the Deśika Prabandhams followed by the recitation of Pillai Andādi. Tirtha, Prasādam were bestowed upon Arayar, Nainār Âchārya and Jīyar.

Nainār Âchārya and Jīyar then proceeded to Tiruvahindrapuram and sought refuge at the feet of Lord Devanāyaka Perumāl and Shengamalai Nāchiyār. This holy site was the place where Vêdânta Deśika had been blessed with the vision of Garuda and Lord Hayagreeva. Recalling this incident, Nainār Âchārya and Jīyar consecrated the Archā of Lord Hayagreeva. At this sacred spot they consecrated the important Archā Vighraha of Vêdânta Deśika that was cast earlier by Deśika himself. They also installed Deśika Vighrahas at Tirukkovalur, Madhurāntakam and Śriperumbudur to finally arrive at Perumāl Koil in Kanchi.

Here, they were welcomed with due honors by Tirumalai Śrinivasāchārya. These three chief disciples of Deśika then installed an Archā of their Âchārya at his residence in Thooppul. They also consecrated the Archā of Vêdânta Deśika in Perumāl Koil and built an enclosure for his shrine. Thus concluding their victorious tour,

Nainār Âchārya and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar considered themselves blessed by the benevolent glances of their Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika!

छात्रजननिबद्धजैत्रध्वजप्रसाधितदशदिशासौधः

chātrajanānibaddhajaitradhvajaprasādhitadaśaśāśāudhaḥ

*"The ten directions are now akin to palatial mansions  
that are adorned with the banner of victory planted  
there by the disciples of Vêdānta Deśika!"*

Sankalpa Suryodaya 1-11,12

### Vêdānta Deśika Tirunakshatram:

Nainār Âchārya and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar then returned to Śrīrangam. On one occasion, they arranged for the celebration of Deśika Tirunakshatram on a 'Purattāsi Tiruvona' Tirunāl. During those grand festivities, recalling the glory of Vêdānta Deśika, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar rendered the verse:

வாழியணி தூப்புல் வருநிகமாந்தாசிரியன்  
வாழியவன் பாதாரவிந்தமலர் – வாழியவன்  
கோதிலாத் தாண்மலரைக் கொண்டாடிக் கொண்டிருக்கும்  
தீதிலா நல்லோர் திரள்

vāḻiyaṇi tūppul varu nikamāntācīriyaṇ  
vāḻiyavaṇ pātāravintamalar -- vāḻiyavaṇ  
kōtilāt tāṇmalaraik koṇṭāṭikkōṇṭirukkum  
tītilā nallōr tiral

*"Long live Nigamānthācharya! The jewel of Thoopul!  
Long live this pair of his lotus feet!  
Long live those blemishless ones whose sole purpose of existence  
is to celebrate the glory of those divine pair of lotus feet!"*

Nainār Āchārya rendered the verse:

வாதாசனவர ரிவரென வருமா பாடியம் வகைபெறுநாள்  
வகுளாபரணப் பெருமாள் தமிழின் வாசி அறிந்திடுநாள்  
பேதா பேதம் பிரமமெனாவகை பிரமந் தெளியுறுநாள்  
பேச்சொன்றுக்குச் சததூஷணியைப் பேசிய தேசிகநாள்  
தீதாகிய பலமாயக் கலியைச் சிக்கென வென்றிடுநாள்  
திக்கெட்டும் புகழ் ஸ்ரீபாஷியத்தைத் தெளியவுரைத் திடுநாள்  
ஓதாதோதும் வேதாந்தாரியன் உதயம் செய்திடுநாள்  
உத்தமமான புரட்டாசித் திருவோணம் எனுநாளே

vātācāṇavara rivareṇa varumā pāṭiyam vakaiperunā!  
vakulāparaṇap perumā! tamizaṇ vāci aṇṇitūnā!  
pētā pētam piramameṇāvakai piraman telivurunā!  
pēcconrukkuc catatūṣaṇiyaip pēciya tēcikanā!  
tītākiya palamāyak kaliyaic cikkena venṇitūnā!  
tikkeṭṭum pukaz śrīpāṣiyattait teliyavuraittitūnā!  
ōtātōtum vētāntāriyaṇ utayam ceytītūnā!  
uttamamāṇa purattācit tiruvōṇam enunā!

*"The day when the essence of Śrī Bhāṣhya were brought out on  
earth, as though by Ādishesha (Rāmānuja) himself;  
the day when the quintessential tenets of Swāmi  
Nammālvār's Tiruvaimoḷi were revealed;  
the day when the true 'tattva' of Brahman was established  
by removing the confusion caused by 'bheda' and 'abheda';  
the day which blessed us with the Shatadushani,  
composed as a reply to opponents in debate;  
the day when inept artistries of 'Māyā' were defeated;  
the day when Śrī Bhāṣhya became proclaimed in all eight directions;<sup>1</sup>  
the day of birth of the one who learnt the  
entire Śruti by hearing it just once;<sup>2</sup>  
this day is the sacred, blessed 'Purrattāsi Tiruvonam' day!"*

- 
1. Swāmi Deśika taught the Śrī Bhāṣhya over 30 times during his glorious life;
  2. Swāmi Deśika was an 'Ekachanda grāhi', i.e. one who is able to accurately recite the entire Veda after hearing it just once. \*Adjacent page: 1. Swāmi Deśika composed countless 'granthas' or works as if he was another Brahma;
  2. Swāmi Deśika defeated all opposing doctrines and established the 'Prappanna

Vennai Kūtha Jīyar rendered the verse:

செங்கமலத்தயனன்னவரென்று புகழ்ந்து மகிழ்ந்திடுநாள்  
 சீர்கொளிராமா நுசுவெனுமந்திரம் பதிகளில் வாழ்திடு நாள்  
 செங்கயல் வாளைகள் சேர்வயல் சூழ்ந்த வரங்கர் சிறந்திடுநாள்  
 சிந்துர வெற்பிடைச் சென்று திகழ்ந்து சிரீபதிவாழ்ந்திடுநாள்  
 தெங்கொடு மாங்கனி தேன்சுனை வேங்கடத்தீசர்பிறந்திடுநாள்  
 சீர்மதி யாகம மௌலிதந் தேசிகர் பிறந்து வளர்ந்திடுநாள்  
 பங்கய மாமலர் மங்கை குணங்களைத் தெளியவெளியிடுநாள்  
 பார்திகழ் பாத்திரபதத் திருவோணமெனுந் திருநன்னாளே.

Ceṅkamalattaya nanṇavareṇru pukazntu makizntiṭuṇā!  
 cīrkolīrāmā nucaveṇumantiram patikaḷil vāzntiṭuṇā!  
 ceṅkayal vāḷaikāḷ cērvayal cūznta varaṅkar ciṛantiṭuṇā!  
 cintura verpiṭaic ceṇru tikazntu cirīpati vāzntiṭuṇā!  
 teṅkoṭu māṅkaṇi tēṇcunai vēṅkaṭattīcar piṛantiṭuṇā!  
 cīrmati yākama maulitan tēcīkar piṛantu vaḷarntiṭuṇā!  
 paṅkaya māmalar maṅkai kuṇaṅkaḷait teḷiya veliyiṭuṇā!  
 pārtikaz pāttirapatat tiruvōṇameṇun tirunaṇṇāḷē

*The day when the one like another 'Brahma' was born;<sup>1</sup>  
 the day when the extra-ordinary mantra called 'Rāmānuja'  
 became established in all places;<sup>2</sup>  
 the day when the glory of Śrīrangam, which is surrounded by fields  
 with 'Kayal' and 'Vaalai' fish, continued to shine;<sup>3</sup>  
 the day when Lord Varada of Kānchipuram became delighted;<sup>4</sup>  
 the day when the Lord of Tirumala, which is surrounded  
 by lush coconut trees, mangroves and sweet honey  
 like water streams, incarnated;<sup>5</sup>  
 the day marking the birth of the one who was bestowed  
 the title of Vedāntācharya by Lord Ranganātha;<sup>6</sup>  
 the day when the true qualities of the 'lotus lady'  
 (Goddess Śree) were clearly expounded;<sup>7</sup>  
 this day is the glorious, celebrated 'Purrattāsi Tiruvonam'<sup>8</sup> day!*

Gayathri'- 'Rāmānuja' Mantra by strengthening the Rāmānuja Siddhantam;  
 3. Swāmi Deśika removed all hurdles in the way of celebration of  
 Tiruadhayana Utsavam and further ensured smooth conduct of this festival without  
 any further interruption; In Tamil literature 'Kayal' and 'Vaalai' fish are  
 mentioned to indicate any region rich in water resource and vegetation. Due to  
 Swāmi Deśika's effort in reviving Tiruadhayana Utsavam, Srirangam flourished

Nainār Āchārya and Vennai Kūtha Jīyar had glorified the importance of the divine ‘Purattāsi Tiruvona’ Tirunāl, the day of descent of Swāmi Deśika. Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar had praised the divinity of Swāmi Deśika. The senior Śree Vaishnava scholars gathered there appreciated the rendition of these verses and concluded these three verses should be incorporated into the ‘*Vāzhi Tirunāmam*’!

### The move to Tirupathi:

Satisfied with the tasks they accomplished together, Nainār Āchārya and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar then decided to visit the divine hill of Tiruvēkatam to seek the blessings of Lord Tiruvēkatamudayān! Arriving at Tirupathi, they prostrated at the feet of Govindaraja Perumāl, visited the shrine of Alamelumanga Nāchiyār at Tiruchānoor and then ascended the hill. Beholding the enchanting form of Tiruvēkatamudayān, they accepted the Tirtha, Prasāda. At this time, the position of the Śrikārya Dhurandhara of the Tirumala temple had fallen vacant.

That night, the great Lord Vēṅkatēśhwara appeared in the dream of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and commanded him to accept the post of the ‘Śrikārya Dhurandhara’ of the Tirumala Koil and to perform Siddhānta Pravachanam there. The Lord also similarly appeared in the dream of the priests and commanded them to invite Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar to occupy the revered seat according to His wishes. He also commanded that the Tiravukol Mudrai (temple keys) and other insignia to be given to the Jīyar as a token of His divine command!

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(Continued from previous page) and therefore the metaphor of the fish is being used. 4. Lord Varadaraja had blessed Swāmi Deśika to become the ‘Darshana Pravartaka’ of the Vēdānta Siddhānta like Rāmānuja; seeing this come to consummation, Lord Varada became delighted. (see page 371). Also, through the medium of his foremost disciple Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, Swāmi Deśika ensured that those heretics who tried to defile the doctrine of Rāmānuja at Kānchipuram were defeated. Further, Swāmi Deśika glorified the Lord of Attigiri by composing numerous works in His praise. For all these reasons Lord Varada became pleased; 5. The Lord of Tirumala incarnated as Swāmi Deśika; 6. Lord Ranganātha bestowed Swāmi Deśika with the title of Vedāntācharya; 7. Swāmi Deśika brought out the true nature of Goddess Śree in his works; 8. Bhādrapada month, Shravana Nakshatram.

The next morning, even as Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar narrated his dream to Nainār Âchārya, the administrators of the temple came in the search of the Jīyar and told him about the wishes expressed by the Lord in their dreams! They also handed over the keys of the temple and other insignias to the Jīyar, and requested him to act according to the wishes of the Lord. Nainār Âchārya, pleased by the miraculous event that was orchestrated through divine intervention, encouraged the Jīyar to accept the noble task. Nainār Âchārya saw the opportunity of rendering Kainkaryam as the Śrīkārya Dhurandhara, in addition to the propagation of the Matham of Rāmānuja through Siddhānta Pravachanam, as a divine blessing of the Lord bestowed directly upon the Jīyar. Heeding to the advice of Nainār Âchārya, and considering himself blessed, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar entered the sanctum of Tiruvēṅkatamudayān. He was offered the Tirtha Prasādam and through the agency of the priests the management of the temple was entrusted to him in front of Śrīnivasa Perumāḷ! Lord Vēṅkatēshwara offered '*Arulappād*' to Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar! Nainār Âchārya was pleased to see the foremost disciple of Vēdānta Deśika being bestowed with this honor by the Lord Himself!

Following this event, Nainār Âchārya proceeded further north into the 'Vada Desha'. Here he met Singappa Nayaka and many other local rulers who were initiated into the Śree Vaishnava fold. He visited Ahobilam and eventually returned to Perumāḷ Koil in Kāñchipuram to continue Siddhānta Pravachanam there. It was at this time that Śrī Mudumbai Hastigirinaatha Annan, a descendent of the famed Mudumbai Nambi family of Śreevathsa Gotram, came to Perumāḷ Koil to seek discipleship under Nainār Âchārya.

Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, in the meanwhile, continued to reside at Tirumala and carried out the duties of the Śrīkārya Dhurandhara to the best of his abilities. Jīyar also built a Matam atop the Venkatdari hill, consecrated the Archā of Vēdānta Deśika and continued to offer Samārādhana to the Archā of Lakshmi Hayagreeva. He also installed an Archā of Vēdānta Deśika at the Sannidhi of Govindaraja Perumāḷ at the foothills in Tirupathi. Apart from managing the temple affairs, he continued Siddhānta

Pravachanam at Tirumala and taught many disciples the doctrine of Rāmānuja.

### **Disciples of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar:**

The Sat-Sampradāyam of Rāmānuja Matham was carried forward by Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar as taught to him by Vēdānta Deśika. This growing branch of the Rāmānuja Matham now became called Deśika Sampradāyam. The chief disciples of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar were:

- 1) Ghatikashatam Ammāl- he was the son of the great-grandson of Nadādur Ammāl. He was therefore the seventh generation descendent in the lineage of Nadādur Ājvān
- 2) Kidāmbi Nayanār
- 3) Komandoor Ācchan
- 4) Pillai Appai
- 5) Perarulāla Ayyan Appai
- 6) Kandādai Āndān
- 7) Veeravalli Pillai

### **Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar attains Parama Padam:**

Year: Prabhava, Kali 4489

1387 C.E.

Place: Tirumala

Eighteen years had elapsed since Vēdānta Deśika had left this world. During that period, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar had accomplished significant tasks along with his close friend, co-disciple and preceptor Nainār Āchārya. In his capacity as the Śree Karya Dhurandhara, he had restored appropriate worship at the temple of Tirumala according to the instructions of Rāmānuja. He had taught to several disciples, the doctrine of Rāmānuja according to the Deśika Sampradāyam. He carried out the worship of the Archā of Lakshmi Hayagreeva in an unbroken manner. According to the instructions of Lord Varadarāja and his own Āchārya Vēdānta Deśika, he had preserved and propagated the Siddhānta of

Rāmānuja according to the Sat-Sampradāya. Time had come for him to now select an appropriate successor and depart from this mortal world to attain the feet of his Âchārya. Lord Tiruvēnkātamudayān gave his consent for Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar to attain His abode.

Pleased with the devotion shown towards him by Perarulāla Aiyan Appai in the spirit of Âchārya Bhakti, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar decided to appoint him as the successor of the Matam to carry out the daily Tiruvārāadhanam of Lakshmi Hayagreeva and to conduct the duties of Śrīkārya Dhurandhara at the Tirumala temple. Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar initiated Perarulāla Aiyan Appai into Sannyāsa by bestowing upon him the Presha Mantra, the saffron robes, and the triple staff according to the appropriate norms and gave him the title of 'Śrī Vātsya Vêdānta Rāmānuja Dviteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar'! In order that the propagation of the Sat-Sampradāya of Rāmānuja Matham continue ceaselessly, he instructed Dviteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar to carry out Siddhānta Pravachanam at Tirumala and Ghatikashatam Ammāl to continue the Siddhānta Pravachanam at Perumāl Koil in Kānchipuram along with Kidāmbi Nayanār. Having performed the Tiruvārāadhanam to the Archā of Lakshmi Hayagreeva and then to Vêdānta Deśika, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar blessed his disciples with the Śrīpaada Tirtha. Resting his mind on the feet of his Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar departed from the mortal world to attain Parama Padam!

Nainār Âchārya having heard of these events ensured that the funeral rites of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar were carried out in an appropriate manner by Veeravalli Pillai, the disciple of the Jīyar. After the performance of the Brahma Medha Kainkaryam, a brindaavanam for the Jīyar was consecrated. The entire retinue of disciples was saddened by this great loss. The disciple, close friend and confidant of Nainār Âchārya had attained the lotus feet of Periya Perumāl Tiruvēnkatesha. Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar had graced this earth by his divine presence for a period of one hundred years from 1287 to 1387 C.E.!

## **Prativādi Bhayankaram Annan, and other disciples of Nainār Âchārya:**

Mudumbai Hastigirinātha Annan, the descendent of the lineage of Mudumbai Nambi, was born at Kānchipuram. He became the disciple of Kumāra Varadāchārya at Kānchipuram. During this time, there arrived, at Perumāl Koil, an arrogant Māyāvāda scholar by the name of Sarvajna Mishra. When none of his other disciples came forward with courage and confidence to face a debate, Nainār Âchārya deputed his cook Mudumbai Annan to proceed to counter the challenge of the arrogant scholar. Nainār Âchārya initiated him into the Hayagreeva Mantra at that very moment. This endowed Annan with special knowledge and divine ability to conquer opponents in debate! Patting Annan's back as a token of encouragement, Nainār Âchārya commanded him to face the opponent and defeat him.

With ease, Mudumbai Annan then countered the arguments of Sarvajna Mishra and completely extirpated his views. The attempt to defile the doctrine of Rāmānuja was therefore unsuccessful. Being exceedingly pleased with this deed of Mudumbai Annan, Nainār Âchārya gave him the title of 'Prativādi Bhayankaram' meaning 'the one who is frightening to opponents', indicating his profundity in knowledge that gave him a skillful ability to destroy opponents in debate. Mudumbai Annan therefore became Prativādi Bhayankaram Annan! At the feet of Nainār Âchārya he learnt the Ubhaya Granthams (Śri Bhāṣhya and Bhagavad Vishaya) and other works of Vêdānta Deśika.

Other disciples of Nainār Âchārya were Kandā dai Annan, Komandur Ācchan, Polipakkam Nayanār, Tirumalai Appar, Kidāmbi Appar, Nadādur Ājvān, Aanandappan, Kandā dai Appan, Emperumānār Appan.

## Nainār Âchārya attains Parama Padam:

Year: Jaya, Kali 4516, Shaka 1337

Month: Phanguni

Day: Krishna Saptami

Sunday, March 3, 1415 C.E.

Place: Kānchipuram

Several disciples had now sought refuge under the tutelage of Nainār Âchārya. Foremost among them was Prativādi Bhayankaram Annan. Other eminent disciples such as Emperumānār Appan, Tirumalai Appar and others had also studied at the feet of Nainār Âchārya. Several works including six eulogizing Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika and eighteen others on the Siddhāntam of Rāmānuja had been composed by Nainār Âchārya. This was apart from numerous works in various other languages that had been composed for the benefit of the Śree Vaishnavās of the Vada Desha. Numerous kings from various parts of the country had sought refuge at his feet and had honored him for his deeds. Along with his dear friend and co-disciple Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, Nainār Âchārya had consecrated Deśika Vighraha at many important Divya Kshetras and had laid down instructions for the appropriate recitation of the Divya Prabandhās. Ninety eight years of his glorious life had elapsed, and the Lord indicated to Nainār Âchārya that the time had now come for him to shed the mortal body and attain His abode.

Having entrusted to Emperumānār Appan, the care of the Archā of Lord Varāda which he obtained from Vêdānta Deśika, Nainār Âchārya handed over the responsibility of continuing Siddhānta Pravachanam to his disciples. In the cyclic year of Jaya, the month of Phanguni, on a Krishna Saptami day, Nainār Âchārya concentrating his thoughts on the twin feet of his father and Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika, left his mortal body to attain the abode of Paramātmā. This occurred in the (current) Kali year of 4516, the

English calendar equivalent being Sunday, March 3, 1415 C.E. His ascent to Parama Padam has thus been recorded:

अभून्नळे धिगश्रीके शके वरददेशिकः ।  
सिगबाके शके प्रायाज्जयेन परमं पदम् ॥  
abhūnnaḷē dhigaśrīkē śakē varadadēśikaḥ .  
sigabākē śakē prāyājjayēna paramaṃ padam ..

*"Śri Varada Deśika was born in the year of 'Nala', or the 'DhigaŚrike' Shaka year. In the year of 'Jaya', or 'Sigabake' Shaka year, he departed from mortal life and attained Parama Padam!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

The Shaka years have been expressed in the form of chronograms. Based on the Katapayādi system of numbering, the year 'Dhigasrike' (Dha, Ga, Ra, Ka) calculates to Shaka year 1239- the year of birth; while the year 'Sigabake' (Sa, Ga, Ba, Ka) calculates to Shaka year 1337- the year of attaining Parama Padam.

Under the guidance of Śri Tirumalai Appar, the son of Tirumalai Śrinivasāchārya, the last rites of Nainār Âchārya were performed by Emperumānār Appan and other disciples.

Twenty eight years had elapsed since the passing away of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and forty six since Vêdānta Deśika had left this world. The glorious period spanning about 145 years, when these three Âchārya Purushas had strode on the earth to propagate the system of Rāmānuja, had now come to a close!

## Prativādi Bhayankaram Annan and Saptatiratnamālīka

Annan composed seventy verses of the Saptati Ratna Mālīka in praise of the glory of his Prāchārya Vêdānta Deśika. This work was composed along the lines of Yatirāja Saptati that Deśika himself had composed earlier in praise of Rāmānuja. The Saptati Ratna Mālīka is a string of seventy three verses that bring out the details of the life of Vêdānta Deśika, his divine descent, his compositions, his devotion to Rāmānuja and also outline his glory as the Sat Sampradāya Ubhaya Vedāntāchārya. A few select verses have been presented here.

युक्त्वा अलूक्षा अपि धर्मकामास्सम्मर्शिनो युक्तिसमन्विताश्च ।  
सद्ब्राह्मणा वेदशिरः प्रसिद्धाः श्रीवेङ्कटाचार्यमुखा हि नूनम् ॥ २५

yuktvā alūṅkā api dharmakāmāssammarśinō yuktisamanvitāśca .  
sadbrāhmaṇā vēdaśiraḥ prasiddhāḥ śrīvēṅkaṭācāryamukhā hi nūnam . 25

*“Śrī Venkatāchārya, known as Vêdānta Deśika, was indeed endowed with the qualities of capacity to judge and understand the scriptures, the ability to put it into practice, adherence to the dictum of the scripture, and such other unique qualities!”*

सर्वतन्त्रधूर्वहस्य वेङ्कटेशधीमतः  
कुर्वतेऽवमाननां तु केचनाधुनोद्भवाः ।  
हन्त ! हन्त ! रामकृष्णदूषणाभिधायिनां  
किन्नु चित्रमत्र चैद्यरावणानुसारिणाम् ॥ ५१

sarvatantradhūrvahasya vēṅkaṭēśadhīmataḥ  
kurvatēvamānanām tu kēcanādhunōdbhavāḥ .  
hanta hanta rāmakṛṣṇadūṣaṇābhidhāyinām  
kinnu citramatra caidyarāvaṇānusāriṇām .. 51

*"The learned Vênkatesha was renowned as a master of all arts! Yet, some people of recent origin insult him! It is not surprising however, since people such as Rāvana and Sishupāla insulted even Supreme beings such as Lord Rāmā and Lord Krishna!"*

अपि काममदलोभशठतादिरहिता  
अपि नीतिधृतिशान्तिमतिदान्तिसहिताः ।  
यतिराजमतधुर्यपदपद्मविमुखाः  
अवलोकनतिमाननुतिबाह्यविषयाः ॥ ५२

api kāmamadalōbhaṣaṭatādi rahitā  
api nītidhṛtiśāntimatidāntisahitāḥ .  
yatirājamatadhuryapadapadmavimukhāḥ .  
avalōkanaatimānnutibāhyaviṣayāḥ .. 52

*"Even if one is devoid of desires, pride, deceit and excessive attachment to wealth; even if one is endowed with righteousness, steadiness, calmness of mind, self-restraint; yet if such a person remains ill-disposed towards the lotus feet of (Deśika) the foremost preceptor of the doctrine of Yatirāja, then he is to be excused from being venerated!"*

विमतिरथवा तेषां युक्ता यतीश्वरजीवने  
कविकथकपञ्चास्ये देवे सतां च धुरन्धरे ।  
परिचितिरहो तन्माहात्म्यप्रकाशकतत्कृति-  
ष्वपि लवमिता स्वप्नेष्वेषां यतो न हि विद्यते ॥ ५३

vimatirathavā tēṣāṃ yuktā yatīśvarajīvanē .  
kavikathakapañcāsyē dēvē satāṃ ca dhurandharē .  
paricitirahō tanmāhātmyaprakāśakatatkṛti-  
ṣvapi lavamitā svapnēpyēṣāṃ yatō na hi vidyatē .. 53

*"Yatirāja was verily Vēdānta Deśika's life-breath! Deśika is the leader of the wise! Yet, why is it that some people remain averse to the lion among poets and logicians? It is only because they are not acquainted with any of the numerous works of his, even one of which is sufficient to portray his greatness!"*

न द्रष्टारो वैभवस्यास्य साक्षात् नैवाभ्यासस्तत्कृतिष्वस्ति येषाम् ।  
येषां नित्यं मानसं साभ्यसूयं तेषां भक्तिस्स्यात् कथं वेङ्कटेशे ॥ ५४

na draṣṭārō vaibhavyāsyā sāṅkṣāt naivābhyāsastatkṛtiṣvasti yēṣāṃ .  
yēṣāṃ nityaṃ mānaśaṃ sābhyaśūyaṃ tēṣāṃ bhaktiśsyāt kathaṃ vēṅkaṭēṣē .. 54

*"Not having directly witnessed the glorious life of Vēdānta Deśika, not having had the chance to study any of his works, those whose minds develop constant ill-will towards him, how indeed will they be able to develop devotion?"*

## Continuation of the Sat Sampradāya

The Sampradāya of Rāmānuja Siddhāntam was at this point carried forward by the following chief disciples of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar:

- 1) Dviteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar
- 2) Ghatikashatam Ammal
- 3) Kidāmbi Nayanār

### 1) Dviteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and the Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi Matam:

Prior to leaving the mortal world, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar appointed his successor Dviteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar to take over three important duties-

- 1) To continue the daily Samārādhana of the Hayagreeva Archā as the 'Matādhipati' of the Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi Matam;
- 2) To continue the propagation of Rāmānuja Siddhāntam by conducting Siddhānta Pravachanam, initiating deserving disciples with Panchasamsakara, preserving the Grantha Koshas dealing with the works of Rāmānuja Siddhānta and Deśika Sampradāya;
- 3) And also to carry out the duties as the Śrikārya Dhurandhara of the Tirumala temple.

He was given the appellation Vātsya Vêdānta Rāmānuja Swāmi. Dviteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar meticulously carried out these ordained duties. He composed a detailed work called 'Pannirāyirappadi' or 'Twelve Thousand Padi' dealing with the Guruparampara Rahasya. He continued these Kainkaryams at Tirumala until his ascent to Parama Padam in the year 1406 C.E. The Taniyan of this Jīyar:

ब्रह्मतन्त्रकृपावाप्तज्ञानयाथात्म्यसम्पदम् ।

नमामि वास्त्यवेदान्तरामानुजमुनीश्वरम् ॥

brahmatantrakṛpāvāptajñānayaāthātmyasampadam .

namāmi vāstyavēdāntarāmānujamunīśvaram ..

*"I bow to Vātsya Vēdānta Rāmānuja Yati, the one  
who obtained the treasure of true knowledge by  
the grace of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jiyar!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Dviteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Jiyar had appointed Śrī Śrinivāsa Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi as the next Matādhapati. This third Brahmatantra Swatantra Jiyar took over the responsibilities of Hayagreeva Archā Samārādhana, Rāmānuja Siddhānta Pravartaka, and the post of Śrikārya Dhurandhara of the Tirumala temple.

For a period of more than six hundred years thereafter, the Deśika Sat Sampradāya of Rāmānuja Matham has continued its unbroken transmission through this succession of 36 Jiyars who have adorned the holy seat of Brahmatantra Swatantra Matam to date. The Nitya Samārādhana of Lakshmi Hayagreeva Archā has also been incessantly carried out by this spiritual succession of Âchāryas. The seventh instruction of Devarāja Perumāl will indeed be kept up through this unbroken tradition until the sun and moon continue to shine!

It is important to mention here that Dviteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Jiyar also forged a unique relationship with a distinguished patron of the Rāmānuja Siddhāntam. During his stay at Tirumala as the Śrikārya Dhurandhara, a local ruler by the name of Yadurāya sought the feet of this Âchārya as refuge. Dviteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Jiyar initiated Yadurāya with the Pancha

Samskārās and blessed him with the quintessential Mantras. This great Yadurāya, at that time a ruler under the Vijayanagara kingdom, was none other than the founder of what was to eventually become the great kingdom of 'Mahisura Pura' or Mysore. This relationship between the Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi Matam and the kings of the Yadurāya dynasty continues unbroken to this day!

## 2) Ghatikashatam Ammāl, Âdi Van Satakopa Swāmi and the Ahobila Matam:

Ghatikashatam Ammāl was the grandson of the grandson of the illustrious Vātsya Varadāchārya or Nadādur Ammāl. He was also named Vātsya Varadārya. He was therefore the seventh generation descendant of Nadādur Ālvān- the 'Priya Bhaagineya' (dear nephew) of Rāmānuja. The title of 'Ghatika Shatam' had been bestowed upon his father owing to the unique ability to compose one hundred verses on any given topic within the time span of one Ghatika, i.e twenty four minutes. The title 'Ammāl' had earlier been bestowed upon Nadādur Ammāl for the motherly affection he had towards Lord Varadarāja! Ghatikashatam Ammāl was therefore called 'Chinna Ammāl'. He studied the Grantha Chatustaya inclusive of the Ubhaya Vêdānta at the feet of Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar. After the ascent of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar to Parama Padam, Ghatikashatam Ammāl returned to Kānchipuram and adorned the chief seat at Perumāl Koil as the Ubhaya Vêdānta Sat-Sampradāya Pravartaka which was previously adorned by his great-great-grandfather, and conducted Rāmānuja Siddhānta Pravachanam there!

A few years prior to this, in the year 1379 C.E., in the lineage of the one branch of the Kidāmbi family at Tirunārāyanapuram, was born to Kidāmbi Keshavāchārya, an illustrious son who was named Kidāmbi Śrinivāsāchārya\*. Kidāmbi Keshavāchārya sent his son Śrinivāsāchārya to Kānchipuram to study the Ubhaya Vêdānta at the feet of Ghatikashatam Ammāl. Ammāl taught him the quintessential doctrinal truths according to the Deśika Sampradāya as he himself had learnt from his Âchārya Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar.

During his discipleship at Kānchipuram under the protective care of Ghatikashatam Ammāl, an important event occurred in the life of Śrinivāsāchārya. Lord Aḷhaghiya Śingar of Ahobilam appeared in the dream of Śrinivāsāchārya and commanded him to proceed to the holy hilly of Ahobilam so that he may render service to the Lord there. Lord Narasimha also ordained that Śrinivāsāchārya accept the ascetic order so as to continue the propagation of Rāmānuja Siddhāntam.

Śrinivāsāchārya recounted to Ghatikashatam Ammāl the blessed vision. Ammāl, pleased with the benevolent grace of the Lord being showered on his disciple, instructed him to act according to the wishes of Perumāl. Śrinivāsāchārya prostrated at the feet of his Âchārya, obtained his blessings and then set forth towards Ahobilam.

On arriving at the holy Kshetra of Ahobilam, Śrinivāsāchārya bathed in the waters of the Bhavanāshini and decked his body with

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\* The birth of Śri Âdi Van Satakopa Swāmi is given as cyclic year of Siddhārtin, Kali 4481, Shaka 1302, Kanya-Purattasi month, Kettai-Jyeshta nakshatram in conjunction with Shukla Paksha Panchami. This date calculates to Friday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 1379 C.E. Source: Monograph released by Śri Visiṭṭādvaitha Research Center, Chennai; based on the series of articles by Sri Bhāshya Simhāsanādhīpati, Purisai Nadādur Sri Krishnamāchar Swāmy.

the twelve Tiruman Śrichoornams. At that very moment, the Lord of Ahobilam appeared in the form of a Vaishnava Yati and gave Śrinivāsāchārya the saffron robes after initiating him into the Preshta Mantra. That compassionate Lord also bestowed on Śrinivasāchārya the name of 'Satakopa Jīyar'. To our Satakopa Jīyar, the Lord also gave an Archā Vighraha of Himself, the Tridandam, the Hamsa Mudra, the Mudras of Shanka-Chakra and other insignia. The Lord commanded Satakopa Jīyar to perform the task of initiating deserving disciples with Panchasamskāra, to continue the propagation of Rāmānuja Siddhāntam and to carry along with him the Ārādhana Archā of Mālola Narasimha at all times during his travels. With this divine mandate, the Ahobila Matam became thus established.

Blessed verily by Lord Alhaghiya Śingar Himself, Ādi Van Satakopa Jīyar, the founder Āchārya of the Ahobila Matam, became the torch bearer of the Deśika Sampradāyam which he adopted under the tutelage of Ghatikashatam Ammāl, the chief disciple of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar! The Deśika Sat Sampradāya of Rāmānuja Matham has therefore also continued its unbroken lineage through this succession of 46 Jīyars who have adorned the holy seat of the Ahobila Matam to date.

The Taniyan of Ghatikashatam Ammāl as composed by Ādi Van Satakopa Jīyar:

नमो वरदविष्णवार्यनयनानन्ददायिने ।

वात्स्याय वरदार्याय वादिनीहारभास्वते ।।

namō varadaviṣṇavāryānayanānandadāyīnē .

vātsyāya varadāryāya vādinīhārabhāsvatē ..

*"Obesciances to Varadāchārya of the Śrīvatsa Vamsha,  
the one who shines as the conqueror over opponents even*

*as the sun does to the snow, beholding whom is verily  
a pleasure for the eyes of (his Guru) Śrī Varada Vishnu!"*

The Taniyan of Âdi Van Satakopa Jīyar:

प्रपद्ये निरवद्यानां निषद्यां गुणसंपदाम् ।  
शरणं भव भीतानां शठकोपमुनीश्वरम् ॥

prapadyē niravadyānāṃ niṣadyāṃ guṇasampadām .  
śaraṇaṃ bhava bhītānāṃ śaṭhakōpamunīśvaram ..

*"I surrender to Satakopa Yati, the repository of  
numerous auspicious qualities, who is capable of  
removing the fear of the cycle of birth and death!"*

It is also important to mention that Śrī Âdi Van Satakopa Swāmi had numerous eminent disciples. One among them was the great Tāllapāka Annamāchārya\*, an incarnation of Nandaka, born in the lineage of Bharadvāja Gotra. This Tāllapāka Annamāchārya studied

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\* The birth of Nandakāmsa Tāllapāka Annamāchārya: Prologues for the Adhyatma Sankirtanas and Sringara Sankirtanas engraved onto the copper plates discovered in the precincts of the Tirumala temple carry the information that Śrī Annamāchārya was blessed with the direct vision of Lord Vēṅkateshwara when he was sixteen years of age. The plates quote the cyclic year of Krodhi, corresponding to Salivāhana Shaka 1346 expired. The Annamāchārya Jeevitha Charitramu gives his Tirunakshatram as Vāishaka, Vishaka. From these details, his birth can be calculated to cyclic year of Sarvadhari, current Kali 4510, current Shaka 1331, between May 9<sup>th</sup> Wednesday and May 10<sup>th</sup> Thursday (Poornima) of 1408 C.E., when Vishaka was in ascendance in the month of Vāigāsi. Some scholars opine that the date quoted on the plates actually refers to the year of birth of Annamāchārya itself. Based on this view, his birth can be calculated to cyclic year of Krodhi, current Kali 4526, current Shaka 1347, Friday May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1424 C.E.

the Deśika Sat Sampradāya at the feet of Âdi Van Satakopan. By the grace of Âdi Van Satakopan, the Lord of the Vênkata hill appeared in a vision to Tāllapāka Annamāchārya and commanded him to compose ‘Divya Sankirtanas’ bringing out the quintessential teachings of Rāmānuja Darshanam. During his lifetime of 95 years, Tāllapāka Annamāchārya ended up composing 32,000 Sankirtanas in Telugu and Sanskrit languages, apart from numerous other works! The grandson of Tāllapāka Annamāchārya, Tāllapāka Tiruvengadanātha (also called Chinnanna) composed the work ‘Annamāchārya Jeevithacharitramu’ in the form of a Dwipada in Telugu. This work elaborates how the Deśika Sat-Sampradāya came to Annamāchārya through Âdi Van Satakopa Swāmi. We quote the relevant passages here:

परमेशुंडगु अहोबलनृसिंहुडु गुरुभावमुनं  
जेरुकोनि त्रिदण्डबुना नरसिंहु चक्रादिमन्त्रमुलु  
ताने प्रत्यक्षंबु दयसेयं गोनुचु ।

paramēśuṇḍagu ahōbalanṛsimhuḍu gurubhāvamunaṁ  
jērukōni tridaṇḍabunā narasiṁhu cakrādimantramulu  
tānē pratyakṣambu dayasēyaṁ gonucu

*“The Supreme God, Lord Nrusimha of Ahobilam,  
out of compassion, Himself appeared in the form of  
a Guru and gave (to Satakopa Muni) the Mantras,  
the tridanda, the Archā of Narasimha, the Shanka  
Chakra Mudrās and other insignia!”*

हरि हयग्रीवुं प्रत्यक्षंबुजेसि धर  
सर्वतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रुण्डैनटिट वेदान्तदेशिकु  
वेङ्कटाचार्युना दिव्यसंप्रदायमुन वर्तिञ्चु

शठकोपमुनिवद् सकलवेदान्तपठनम्बुं जेसि  
अभङ्गविस्फूर्ति हरिपूज हरिसेव हरिकीर्तनम्बु  
हरिमननमु ध्यानमनिशम्बुं दनकु  
घनतर सकलभोगम्बुलुगांगमनुचु ।

hari hayagrīvaṃ pratyakṣambujēsi dhara  
sarvatantrasvatantruṇḍainaṭṭi vēdāntadēśiku  
vēṅkaṭācāryunā divyasampradāyamuna vartiṇcu  
śaṭhakōpamunivadda sakalavēdāntapaṭhanambuṃ jēsi  
abhaṅgavisphūrṭi haripūjaharisēva harikīrtanambu  
harimananamu dhyānamaniśambuṃ danaku  
ghanatara sakalabhōgambulugāṅgamanucu

*"At the feet of this Satakopa Muni; who had  
embraced the Divya Sampradāyam of  
Sarva Tantra Swatantra Venkatāchārya,  
also called Vēdānta Deśika, who himself  
had previously obtained the blessed vision of Lord  
Hari in the form of Hayagreeva;  
(from that Satakopa Muni) Annamāchārya learnt  
the art of worshipping Hari, the method of  
serving Him, the means of singing His praises,  
the means of constantly meditating upon Him!"*

-Annamāchārya Jeevitha Charitramu  
(Telugu in Devanagari script above)

Tāllapāka Tiruvengadanātha composed this work in the early 1500's; just a few years after Tāllapāka Annamāchārya attained the abode of Vaikuntam. The latest date assignable to this work is still around 1550 C.E., and this underlines the authenticity of the facts presented in this work. The information gathered from this work

‘Annamāchārya Jeevitha Charitramu’ clarifies several important issues:

- 1) There existed a collateral branch among the Śree Vaishnavās that specifically followed the teachings of Rāmānuja as elucidated by Śrī Vēdānta Deśika. The doctrine of Rāmānuja as taught by Vēdānta Deśika therefore became called as Deśika Divya Sampradāyam!

Ādi Van Satakopa Swāmi imbibed the teachings of Deśika Sampradāya through his preceptor Ghatikashatam Ammāl. This Ghatikashatam Ammāl was the immediate disciple of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, the foremost Āchārya who taught the doctrine of Rāmānuja as elucidated by Vēdānta Deśika.

- 2) This work also clarifies all doubts pertaining to the affiliation of Śrī Ādi Van Satakopa Jīyar and the Ahobila Matam. Starting from Śrī Ādi Van Satakopa Jīyar, all Āchāryas of the Ahobilam Math have followed only the Sat Sampradāyam of Rāmānuja Matham as taught by Vēdānta Deśika!

The divine relationship between Śrī Ādi Van Satakopa Swāmi and his Prāchārya Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar is also immortalized in this most beautiful verse:

आदिश्रीवण्शठारिर्यतिपतिरभवद्यत्पदाब्जोपजीव्यः  
सोऽयं श्रीवत्सवंश्यो वरदगुरुरपि छात्रतां यत्र भेजे ।  
द्वैतीयिकावतारो य इह यतिपतेर्ब्रह्म यश्च द्वितीयं  
छात्रो वेदान्तसूरेस्स खलु विजयतां ब्रह्मतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रः ॥

ādiśrīvaṇṣaṭhāriryatipatirabhavadyatpadābjōpajīvyah  
sōyam śrīvatsavamśyō varadagururapi cchātratām yatra bhējē .  
dvaitīyīkāvatārō ya iha yatipatērbrahma yaśca dvitīyam  
chātrō vēdāntasūrēssa khalu vijayatām brahmatantrasvatantrah ..

*“Śrī Âdi Van Satakopa Jīyar was enlivened by seeking the lotus feet of Sri Vātsya Varada Guru of the Śrīvatsa lineage, who himself sought tutelage under Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, the disciple of Vêdānta Deśika! Victory be to that Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, who is like a reincarnation of Yatirāja, and verily a second Brahman!”\**

-Granthopasamhāra of the Alankāramanihāra

### 3) Kidāmbi Nayanār, Śrī Manavāla Mahamuni and Vanamāmalai Jīyar:

Kidāmbi Nayanār was also known by the name of Purushottama Deshikar, Kidāmbi Tirumala Nayanār or Kidāmbi Tirumalayyengar. He was born in one branch of the Kidāmbi family residing at Kanchipuram. Having studied the Ubhaya Vêdānta at the feet of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, Kidāmbi Nayanār returned to Kānchipuram under the protective care of Nainār Âchārya. After the ascent of Nainār Âchārya to Parama Padam, Kidāmbi Nayanār continued to perform Siddhānta Pravachanam at Perumāl Koil.

It was around at this time that Śrī Manavāla Māmuni\*\* went to Perumāl Koil, to learn the Śrī Bhāshya from Kidāmbi Nayanār. Here, Manavāla Māmuni was joined by his Sat-Sishya Śrī Vanamāmalai Jīyar as a co-disciple under the tutelage of Kidāmbi Nayanār Swāmi.

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\*This beautiful Sloka is difficult to translate precisely. Freely translated it runs- “Victory be to that Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, who is like a reincarnation of Yatirāja, and verily a second Brahman; who is the disciple of Vêdānta Deśika; at whose feet Sri Vātsya Varada Guru of the Śrīvatsa lineage sought discipleship; and that Sri Vātsya Varada Guru was the one by seeking whose lotus feet, Śrī Âdi Van Satakopa Jīyar became enlivened!”

\*\*See adjacent page footnote.

The Muvāyirappadi indicates that it was Kidāmbi Nayanar, the disciple of Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar who taught the Śrī Bhāshya to Manavāla Māmuni. The fact that Kidāmbi Nayanar- the disciple of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and Kidāmbi Tirumala Nayanār- the preceptor of Manavāla Māmuni are one and the same is further corroborated by another traditional work- The Periya Tirumudi Adavu of Śrī Kandātai Nayan. This work indicates that Kidāmbi Nayanar studied the Śrī Bhāshya and Śruta Prakāshika Vyākhyānam at the feet of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar.

ब्रह्मतन्त्रस्वतन्त्र जीयर् श्री पादत्तिले  
किडांबि तिरुमलय्यंगार् आश्रयित्तार् ।  
brahmatantraswatantra jīyar śrī pādattilē  
kiḍāmbi tirumalayyaṅgār āśrayittār

*“Kidāmbi Tirumalayyangaṅgar sought refuge at the  
sacred feet of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar”*

-Periya Tirumudi Adavu  
(Tamil in Devanagari script above)

And then again, while dealing with the life of Śrī Manavāla Mahāmuni, it indicates that Kidāmbi Nayanar was the Āchārya who taught Manavāla Māmuni the Śrī Bhāshya and Śruta Prakāshika Vyākhyānam

श्रीभाष्यादि ग्रन्थंगळुं श्रुतप्रकाशिकैयुम्  
साधित्तरुळिनवर् किडांबि तिरुमलय्यंगार् ।  
śrībhāṣyādi granthaṅgaḷuṁ śrutaprakāśikaiyum  
sādhittaruḷinavar kiḍāmbi tirumalayyaṅgār

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\*\* (Previous page) : The birth of Śrī Manavāla Māhāmuni is given as cyclic year of Sādhārana (Current Kali 4472, current Shaka 1293), month of Aippasi-Tula, under the asterism of Tiru Moola in conjunction with Shukla Chaturdashi. This date calculates to Thursday, October 24, 1370 C.E. Source of astrological information is the Ārāyarappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam.

*“He (Śrī Manavāla Mahāmuni) was taught the Śrī Bhāshya and Śrūta Prakāshika by Kidāmbi Tirumalayyengar”*

-Periya Tirumudi Adavu  
(Tamil in Devanagari script above)

Śrī Manavāla Mahāmuni had studied the Divya Prabandham and Bhagavad Vishayam directly from his Âchārya Śrī Tiruvaimoḷi Pillai at Âḷvār Tirunagari. He then studied the Tattva Traya and other Rahasya Granthas at the feet of Śrī Kura Kulottama Dāsar. At this time, the knowledge of the Śrī Bhāshya according to the Śrūta Prakāshika Vyākhyānam (expositions of Nadādur Ammāl), had descended through the tradition of Vêdānta Deśika to his disciple Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar. This traditional knowledge had then been passed on to Kidāmbi Nayanār by the Jīyar himself. It is for this reason that Kidāmbi Nayanār had become the authority over the traditional interpretation of the Śrī Bhāshya.

Śrī Manavāla Mahāmuni and his disciple Vanamāmalai Jīyar imbibed this traditional knowledge of the Śrī Bhāshya and Śrūta Prakāshika from Kidāmbi Nayanar. Owing to this relationship between Śrī Manavāla Mahāmuni, Śrī Vanamāmalai Jīyar and their preceptor Kidāmbi Nayanar, Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar is uniquely linked to them in the divine tradition of the Śrī Bhāshya Guruparampara.

Following this, Śrī Manavāla Mahāmuni became renowned as one among the most eminent scholars of Rāmānuja Siddhānta. Entitled ‘Periya Jīyar’, he became the Siddhānta Pravartaka at Śrīrangam. His close disciple, Śrī Vanamāmalai Swamy, was appointed as the founding Jīyar of a Matam at Vanamāmalai Kshetram. Lord Aranganagarappan became the Aaradhya Moorthy of this sacred Vanamāmalai Matam! Carrying forward the Sat-Sampradāya, the disciplinic succession of Śrī Vanamāmalai Matam continues unbroken to this day!

#### 4) The Munitraya Sampradāyam and Ândavan Âshramam:

Śri Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and the Parakāla Śri Matam also play a central role in the transmission of the Deśika Divya Sampradāyam forward into another sub-lineage of what is revered as the Munitraya Sampradāyam. A sub-lineage of the Guru Sishya Parampara developed over time, eventually leading to the formation of two other Matams- Śrimad Ândavan Âshramam and Śrimad Poundarikapuram Ândavan Âshramam at Śrirangam.

Śri Varada Vishnavāchārya was the son and disciple of Ghatikashatam Ammāl - the direct disciple of Śri Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi. He was taught the works of purvācharyās by his father Ghatikashatam Ammāl and also by Śri Âdi Van Satakopa Swāmi. Varada Vishnuvāchārya had two grandsons- Śri Vātsya Ahobilāchārya and Śri Vātsya Varadāchārya. These two scholars had a disciple by the name of Vangipuram Śri Shasta Parāṅkusha Swāmi of Bhāradwaja Gotra.

The nephew and disciple of this Vangipuram Parāṅkusha Swāmi was the great Panchabhanjanam Tātāchariar, son of Lakshmi Kumara Tātāchariar, a descendant of the Sottai family of the Shatamarshana Gotra. He was also called as Kotikanyādānam Tātāchariar. Seven generations of unbroken disciplinic succession down from Panchabhanjanam Tātāchariar leads us to Śri Vêdānta Rāmānuja Mahādeśikan who was born at TiruNārāyana puram and was also called as Śri Sākshāt Swāmi.

This Sākshāt Swāmi was the Âchārya of Śri Gopālārya Mahādeśikan (1701 – 1783 C.E.) – the 14<sup>th</sup> generation descendant of Śri Kidāmbi Appullār of Âtreya Gotra. Note that all these Âchāryas beginning with Śri Ghatikashatam Ammāl all the way upto Śri Gopālārya Mahādeśikan were grihastās (householders).

At this point however, while Śrī Gopālārya Mahādeśikan was serving Lord Hayagreeva at a place called Tirukkudanthai, three Yativarya disciples (Sannyāsin disciples) came and sought refuge at his feet. These three Yatis were – Śrī Śrinivasa Mahādeśikan, Śrī Ranganātha Mahādeśikan and Śrī Vêdānta Rāmānuja Mahādeśikan. This led to the formation of the Munitraya Sampradāyam and Śrī Gopālārya Mahādeśikan (or Tirukkudanthai Deśikan) therefore became known as Munitraya Sampradāya Pravartaka.

Tirukkudanthai Deśikan was succeeded by Śrī Vêdānta Rāmānuja Mahādeśikan as the Sampradāya Pravartaka. Vêdānta Rāmānuja Mahādeśikan also came to be called as ‘Vazhuthur Ândavan’ by his disciples; where the term Ândavan signifies ‘one who rules over the heart of his disciples’! Thereafter, the disciplinic succession itself came to be known as the ‘Ândavan Parampara’. This is the unique blessed relationship between the Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi Matam and the Ândavan Sampradāyam!

# Pannirāyirappadi Śloka Trayam

## of Dviteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar

ब्रह्मतन्त्रकृपावाप्तज्ञानयाथात्म्यसम्पदम् ।  
नमामि वास्त्यवेदान्तरामानुजमुनीश्वरम् ॥

brahmatantrakṛpāvāptajñānayāthātmyasampadam .  
namāmi vāstyavēdāntarāmānujamunīśvaram ..

*“I bow to Vātsya Vēdānta Rāmānuja Yati, the one  
who obtained the treasure of true knowledge by  
the grace of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar!”*

### Pannirāyirappadi Śloka Trayam

Three important Ślokas have been extracted from the Pannirāyirappadi (12,000) Guruparampara Prabhāvam composed by Śri Vātsya Vêdānta Rāmānuja Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi, also called Dviteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar. Unfortunately, out of the 12,000 Padi only 3 Ślokas are available to us. Fortunately, these 3 Ślokas are probably the most important verses in the Guruparampara Prabhāvam because they describe three key events in the life of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and his Āchārya Vêdānta Deśika.

कल्यब्धेषु चतुस्सहस्रशतपङ्क्त्यब्धे यदुक्ष्माधरे  
हस्तर्क्षे बहुधान्यवत्सरनभशुक्लद्वितीयायुते ।  
श्रीशः श्रीशरजिद् यतीशनिगमान्तार्यप्रभावोज्वलः  
सुशलोकोऽवततार दिव्यमहिमा रामानुजोक्त्यादिमः ॥

वर्षेतत्परसर्वधारिणि धनुर्मासे तु रङ्गस्थले  
संप्राप्ताध्यनोत्सवम् प्रतिहतिम् सम्मोचयन्तं गुरुम् ।  
सम्मन्यानघहृद्यलक्ष्मणदयापात्राख्य पद्योत्तमम्  
श्रीश्रीरङ्गपतीच्छया नियमितं दिव्यप्रबन्धाध्यये ॥

तत्पश्चात् भुवि दिव्यदेशपटले श्रीवैष्णवानां गृहे  
सर्वत्र द्रमिडागमप्रवचनं श्रीरंगराट् शासनात् ।  
तत् पद्योत्तमपूर्वमेन सुधियः संतस्तदाकुर्वते  
तत् संतुष्टमना सदिष्टफलदः श्रीशः सदा मोदते ॥

**Śloka 1; Tiruavatāram of the divine verse ‘Rāmānuja Dayāpātram’ in Bahudhānya Varsham!**

कल्यब्धेषु चतुस्सहस्रशतपङ्क्त्यब्धे यदुक्ष्माधरे  
हस्तर्क्षे बहुधान्यवत्सरनभशुक्लद्वितीयायुते ।  
श्रीशः श्रीशरजिद् यतीशनिगमान्तार्यप्रभावोज्वलः  
सुश्लोकोऽवततार दिव्यमहिमा रामानुजोक्त्यादिमः ॥

kalyabdhēṣu catussahasraśatapaṅktyabdhē yadukṣmādhare  
hastarkṣē bahudhānyavatsaranabhaśukladvitiyāyutē .  
śrīśaḥ śrīśarajid yatiśanigamāntāryaprabhāvōjvalaḥ  
suślōkōvatatāra divyamahimā rāmānujōktyādimah

*“In the Kali year of four thousand - four hundred - forty  
at the Yadu hill, under the stellar constellation of Hasta, in the  
Bahudhānya year, the month of Nabha, under the conjunction  
of shukla paksha dviteeya; due to the divine grace of Lord  
Śrīman Nārāyana, Satakopa, Yatisha and other Āchāryas; the  
renowned benedictory verse beginning with the word ‘Rāmānuja’  
took birth to illuminate the greatness of Vēdānta Deśika!”*

Kalyaabdeshu: in the Kali year, Abda means year  
Chatus-sahasra-shata-panktya: refers to 4440; Chatus-sahasra-shata  
is 4400, and Pankti means 40  
Yadukshmaadhare: at Yadugiri or Tirunārāyanapuram;  
Kshmaadhara means hill  
Hastarkshe: the Nakshatram of Hasta; Aarksa means star or  
constellation  
Bahudhānya Vatsara: the cyclic year of Bahudhānya; Vatsara means  
year  
Nabha: the month of Nabha; i.e the 5<sup>th</sup> Solar month of Simha;  
Aavani in the Tamil calendar  
Sukla Dviteeyaayute: Shukla Paksha, Dviteeya Tithi; Aayuta means  
a combination of  
Śreesha: The Lord of Śree, Lord Nārāyana  
Śri: Goddess Lakshmi, the consort of Lord Nārāyana

Sharajid: One who has conquered Sata Vayu, i.e Nammālvār

Yatisha: the Emperor among ascetics, Rāmānuja

Divya Mahima: being blessed by the divine grace of; having been graced by the entire Guruparampara starting with Śrīman Nārāyaṇa, Vishwakṣena, Nammālvār, Nāthamuni, Yāmunāchārya, Rāmānuja and others;

Prabhaavojvalaha: to illuminate the greatness of

Nigamaantaarya: Nigamānta Maha Deśika or Vêdānta Deśika

Su-Ślokaha: the renowned benedictory verse

Rāmānujoktyaadimaha: beginning with the word 'Rāmānuja';

aadima means first, i.e. beginning with; ukta means word; refers to the most celebrated verse 'Rāmānuja Dayāpātram'

Avatataara: took birth

**Śloka 2; Restoration of Tiru Adhyayana Utsavam in Sarvadhāri Varsham!**

वर्षेतत्परसर्वधारिणि धनुर्मासे तु रङ्गस्थले  
संप्राप्ताध्यनोत्सवम् प्रतिहतिम् सम्मोचयन्तं गुरुम् ।  
सम्मान्यानघहृदयलक्ष्मणदयापात्राख्य पद्योत्तमम्  
श्रीश्रीरङ्गपतीच्छया नियमितं दिव्यप्रबन्धाध्यये ॥

varṣētatparasarvadhāriṇi dhanur māsē tu raṅgasthalē  
samprāptādhyanōtsavam pratihatim sammōcayantaṁ gurum .  
sammānyānaghahṛdyalakṣmaṇadayāpātrākhyā padyōttamam  
śrīśrīraṅgapatīcchayā niyamitaṁ divyaprabandhādhyaē ..

*"Following that, during the Dhanur Māsam of the year Sarvadhāri, at Śrīrangam, Guru Vêdānta Deśika resumed the conduct of the interrupted Adhyayanotsavam! Goddess Śree and the Lord of Śrīrangam honored him by ordering the recitation of the most elevated, most cherished, blemishless verse 'Rāmānuja Dayāpātram' along with the recitation of the Divya Prabandhās!"*

**Tatpara:** Following that; i.e. after the Tiruavatāram of the divine verse 'Rāmānuja Dayāpātram'

**Varshe:** in the year

**Sarvadhārini:** Sarvadhārī

**Dhanur Maase:** the solar month of Dhanus; Maarghali month in Tamil

**Tu:** then, during that time

**Ranga Sthale:** at Tiruarangam or Śrirangam

**Sampraapta:** received

**Aadhyayanotsava:** Tiru Adhyayana Utsavam; the recitation festival

**Pratihati:** impeded / obstructed or interruption

**Sammochyanta:** having absolved / removed

**Gurum:** Guru Vēdānta Deśika

**Sammaanya:** in order to bestow the most elevated honor

**Anagha:** flawless, blemishless

**Hrudya:** most cherished, most close to the heart, most intimate

**Padyottama:** most elevated, most excellent, most exalted verse

**Aakhyaa:** called

**Lakshmana Dayaapaatra:** Rāmānuja Dayāpātram

**Śri:** Goddess Ranganāyaki Tāyār

**Śrirangapati:** Lord Ranganātha

**Ichayaa:** desire, wish

**Niyamittam:** prescribed, ordered

**Divyaprabhandhaadya:** at the commencement of the

**Divyaprabhandham** rendition

**Śloka 3; The divine mandate of Lord Ranganātha continues to shine forever!**

तत्पश्चात् भुवि दिव्यदेशपटले श्रीवैष्णवानां गृहे

सर्वत्र द्रमिडागमप्रवचनं श्रीरंगराट् शासनात् ।

तत् पद्योत्तमपूर्वमेन सुधियः संतस्तदाकुर्वते

तत् संतुष्टमना सदृष्टफलदः श्रीशः सदा मोदते ॥

tatpāścāt bhuvi divyadeśapaṭalē śrīvaiṣṇavānām gṛhē .

sarvatra dramiḍāgamappravacanam śrīraṅgarāṭ śāsanāt .

tat padyōttama pūrvamēna sudhiyaḥ santastadākurvātē  
tat santuṣṭamanā sadiṣṭaphaladaḥ śrīśaḥ sadā mōdatē ..

*“Following this, in all the Divya Deshas on the earth  
and in individual homes of the Śree Vaishnavās, the best  
among verses (Rāmānuja Dayāpātram) was uttered by the wise  
and learned people, prior to the commencement of the Divya  
Prabandha Pravachanam, in accordance with the divine  
mandate of Śri Ranganātha! Being pleased by this, the Lord of Śree  
who grants us our desired wishes remains eternally delighted!”*

Tat Paschaad: after that, i.e. after Perumāl and Pirātti conveyed their  
desire, their wish

Divya-desha Patale: in the multitude of Divya Deshams

Bhuvi: on the earth

Śrivaishnavaanaam Gruhe: and in the homes of Śree Vaishnavās

Sarvatra: at all times; also everywhere

Dramidaagama Pravachanam: at the time of studying or reciting the  
Dramida Agama or the Divyaprabhandham

Śrirangaraat Shasanaat: in accordance with the divine mandate of  
Śri Ranganātha

Tat: that

Padyottama: most elevated, most excellent, most exalted verse

Purvamena: preceeding, prior to, or beginning with

Sudhiya Santaha: the wise, the learned sages

tad: thus

Aakurvate: they did, i.e. they recited

Tat: by that

Santuṣṭa: being pleased, being delighted

Śreeshaha: the Lord united inseparably with Śree

Phalada: who bestows, who grants

Manaa sadishta: whatever desired by the mind

Sadaa: eternally, perpetually

Modate: remains delighted, rejoices!



श्री ब्रह्मतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रयोगीन्द्रकृतम्

दिव्यसूरि स्तुतिः

**Divya Sūri Stuti**

*Composed by*

*Śri Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar*



*Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar's*

## **Divya Sūri Stuti**

*The praise of the Guruparampara!*

लक्ष्मीनाथसमारंभां नाथयामुनमध्यमाम् ।

अस्मदाचार्यपर्यन्तां वन्दे गुरुपरंपराम् ॥

lakṣmīnāthasamārambhāṃ nāthayāmunamadhyamām .

asmadācāryaparyantāṃ vandē guruparamparām ..

*"We worship the entire Guru Parampara- starting  
with the Lord of Lakshmi, with Nāthamuni and Yāmunamuni  
in the middle, all the way upto our Āchārya!"*

अस्मदगुरुसमारंभां यतिशेखरमध्यमाम् ।

लक्ष्मीवल्लभपर्यन्तां वन्दे गुरुपरंपराम् ॥

asmadgurusamārambhāṃ yatiśekharamadhyamām .

lakṣmīvallabha paryantāṃ vandē guruparamparām ..

*" Starting with our Guru, with Yatirāja in the middle,  
and all the way upto the Lord of Lakshmi,  
we worship the entire Guru Parampara!"*





## दिव्यसूरि स्तुतिः

The Divya Sūri Stuti is a hymn composed by Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi in praise of the Guru Parampara. It is composed in the Anushtup meter, consisting of eight syllables per Pādā, or quarter portion of a verse. Each verse therefore comprises of 32 syllables.

### Guruparampara:

The Guru Parampara is the unbroken chain of preceptors, who carry forth the traditional teachings of the Vêdānta in an incessant manner through worthy successors. The word Guru can be broken into 'Gu'- which means 'darkness' or 'ignorance' and 'Ru'- which means 'one who dispells'. Therefore the preceptor who dispells ignorance is called as 'Guru'. In its precise usage, the word Guru is indicative one who dispells the ignorance with regard to the import of Vêdānta. The word 'Parampara' means a 'traditional succession' of such preceptors, here pertaining to the school of Rāmānuja. The scriptures define a 'Guru' as follows:

गु शब्दस्त्वन्धकाराख्यो रु शब्दस्तन्निरोधकः ।

अन्धकारनिरोधित्वात् गुरुरित्यभिधीयते ॥

gu śabdastvandhakārākhyō ru śabdastannirōdhakah .

andhakāranirōdhitvāt gururityabhidhīyatē ..

*"The letter 'Gu' denotes ignorance and the letter 'Ru' denotes its removal. Therefore the one who dispells ignorance is called as 'Guru'!"*

- As quoted in Prapanna Pārijāta, 4- 48

The system of Rāmānuja is one of the doctrines that upholds the teaching of the Vêdānta. The foremost preceptor in this tradition is Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Himself! At the very beginning of creation, the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa created Chaturmukha Brahma and then revealed the Vêdās to him. Through Brahma, and great realized sages, the teaching of the Vêdā is then revealed to the multitude of created beings. Lord Nārāyaṇa is therefore the Supreme preceptor.

### **The doctrine of Vêda-Vêdānta, the ‘Sanātana Dharma’:**

All created beings, beginning with Brahma, are subject to the cycle of birth and death. This is an endless cycle and causes repeatedly the entry of individual souls into perishable bodies made of matter. Such an association causes the otherwise blissful individual soul to become enveloped by ignorance; and this ignorance causes the fear of ‘Samsāra’. The teaching of the Vêdā is aimed at annihilating the endless cycle of Samsāra.

Even within the Vêdā, there are portions of the text dealing with the procurement of material pleasures- ‘Prakṛiti Bhoga’ and portions dealing with the enjoyment of the ‘Atman’ or individual self- ‘Puruṣa Bhoga’. These sections however are not beneficial to one who is desirous of the Highest end. It is only the nectarine teaching called ‘Vêdānta’ that is capable of bestowing the Supreme end.

The terminal portion of the Vêdās are called Vêdānta. Vêdānta comprises of the Upanishads, i.e the section which reveals the quintessential truths for the ultimate good of the universe! The Vêdānta teaches:

- 1) The essential nature of the self as different from the physical body
- 2) The attributes of the individual self

- 3) The essential nature of the Supreme Brahman Nārāyaṇa, as the inner controller of the individual selves and also of inert matter
- 4) The attributes of the Supreme Brahman
- 5) The path of meditation through devotion, leading to direct experience of the Supreme Brahman and the final result of such meditation
- 6) The path of Sharanāgathi or Nyāsa Vidya

It is important to note, as explained by Rāmānuja in the Vedārthasangraha, that the teaching of the Vêdā in itself is 'Aparusheya', i.e. a doctrine which is unauthored. The fact that the Vêdās are an authoritative source of knowledge is declared by the Jaimini Sūtra (1-1-5) which states:

औत्पत्तिकस्तु शब्दस्यार्थान् संबन्धः

autpattikastu śabdasyārthān sambandhaḥ

*"The relation of words to facts is inherent!"*

The words in the Vêdā are unlike the words employed in human language. In human language, the construction of a sentence is based on an arrangement of words in a specific order, deemed fit by human intelligence, for the purpose of conveying a required or intended meaning. The Vêdās however, are not an arrangement of words derived from human intelligence. The words of the Vêdā follow a pre-established order of utterance, and this order is followed strictly according to a tradition of remembrance. The specific order of words carries a specific significance and this is pre-determined to convey an eternal truth. Because this order of words derives from an ancient immemorial tradition, the Vêdās are said to be eternal and un-authored. Therefore this doctrine is also called as 'Sanātana Dharma' or 'the eternal law'!

The Vêdā in its entirety contains a flow of words that convey the knowledge concerning the Supreme Lord Nārāyana. The Vêdās teach us the true essential nature of the Supreme Brahman- Lord Śrīman Nārāyana, the correct means of worshipping Him and the nature of the results of such worship. The Vêdā is as ancient as the Supreme Brahman for He is the one who reveals it to the four-faced Brahma at very the beginning of creation. The word Vêdā stands for 'true knowledge' and the Supreme Brahman is the one capable of revealing this 'true knowledge'.

For the benefit of mankind, these passages have been handed down through the ages by an unbroken tradition of remembrance and repetition, from preceptor to disciple. It is to be remembered that the verses of the Vêdā existed even prior to the discovery and use of a written script. Therefore the Vêdā has been transmitted primarily through a tradition of oral recitation. Over time, the words of the Vêdā have also been drawn out to be employed in communicative language, to denote certain meanings.

So also, the import of these Vedic passages, which teach the essential nature of Lord Nārāyana, have been handed down from preceptor to disciple in an unbroken manner. This is called a Parampara or tradition of succession. Because the Vêdās and their auxiliary disciplines are very vast and moreover esoteric, the correct interpretation of their inherent meanings is only obtained by adhering to the Parampara- i.e the established tradition of succession.

### **Upabrahamana:**

Given the esoteric nature of the text of the Vêdās, there exist auxillary texts that further clarify and elaborate on the teaching of the Vêdā. Such texts are called as 'Upabrahamana'. The word 'Upabrahamana' literally means 'the act of promoting'. The Âgamās, Smṛiti texts like Dharma Shāstras, Itihāsas, Purānās are works that seek to clarify the teaching of the Vêdās. These texts are

composed by revered sages in order to reinforce the Vêdās. The Lord Himself directs great sages to compose works such as Dharma Shāstras, Itihāsās and Purānās in order to recollect and teach the profound meanings of the Vedic injunctions. Great sages such as Vālmiki, Parāshara, Vyāsa, Shuka, and such others have composed works that carry forth the true meanings of the Vêdā for the benefit of mankind. Therefore these texts also serve as the authority in as much they bring out the true meaning of the Vêdā.

### **Self study of Scriptures is not prescribed:**

In the order of creation, every living entity below the Supreme Brahman, including great souls like four-headed Brahma and others, are subject to the influence of the three Gunas- Sattva, Rajas and Tamas; that too in varying degrees. Such an influence of Gunas brings about ignorance, a quality that clouds understanding. Being thus deprived of correct knowledge, the individual souls are incapable of differentiating truth from non-truth.

Individuals seek various ways to overcome this ignorance. Among the numerous paths available, some resort to self study of the scriptures. They try to understand the teaching of the scriptures by applying their mind to very profound scriptural concepts.

The statements of the scriptures however are esoteric. They are vast, and moreover seemingly contradictory to one another at many places. Even learned individuals find it difficult to comprehend the true essence of the scriptures. Under such circumstances, the ordinary person can be completely misled. If one resorts to self-study, the concepts taught in the scriptures can be understood only up to the extent of an individual's personal capacity and according to the individual's personal ideas. Understanding the scriptures according to one's personal ideas does not necessarily convey the true import of the texts. Therefore, self study of the scriptures is not an advocated means of obtaining valid knowledge. In fact, it is said

that the study of scriptures itself (let alone self-study) can lead to anxiety and cause much anguish!

शास्त्रज्ञानं बहुक्लेशं बुद्धेश्चलनकारणम् ।  
उपदेशात् हरिं बुद्ध्वा विरमेत् सर्वकर्मसु ॥

śāstra jñānaṁ bahuklēśaṁ buddhēścalanakāraṇam .  
upadēśāt hariṁ buddhvā viramēt sarvakarmasu ..

*“Study of scriptures gives rise to extreme distress and moreover is a cause for disturbance of the mind and intellect! It is wise to abstain from all actions and realize Lord Hari through preceptorial instruction!”*

This is where a preceptor or an Âchārya plays an important role. An Âchārya who has been taught the scriptures through means of a valid tradition is able to comprehend the import of the scriptures with clarity. In such a situation, there is no distress or anxiety.

One may ask- If the knowledge of the Vêdā and Vêdānta is obtained by means of a system where teaching is imparted according to a fixed tradition, what then is the role of intelligence and reasoning on the part of a pupil who endeavors to attain that knowledge? We must therefore immediately point out that learning from tradition ensures fidelity to the central import of the scriptures. Even in such a system, however, the reasoning and intellectual ability of a disciple plays a central role. The disciple is not reduced to the status of a mere parrot which, without much thought or understanding, merely repeats the words or the actions of another! The scriptures give a lot of importance to clarification and re-clarification of the quintessential concepts before the disciple accepts them. Inquiry into the ultimate truth is very much encouraged, but with the caution that it must be done under the guidance of a knowledgeable and capable preceptor. One must not be perversely inquisitive merely to investigate the validity of the scripture or to question its

tenets. However, one may repeatedly clear doubts pertaining to the scriptural teaching, maintaining unshakable faith in the scriptures and Guru. When there is faith in the scriptures and in the Guru, questions arise for the sake of clarification. When there is no such faith, clarifications are sought for the sake of questioning!

### The need to resort to an Âchārya:

Being subject to the three Gunas of nature, every living entity thinks and acts according to its innate impressions which create likes and dislikes, thus developing an individual bias. We say therefore that in interpreting the texts of the Vêdās which have no authorship, individual bias is bound to creep in. The true import of the teachings can be distorted by such individual bias.

Knowledge that is transmitted through an unbroken tradition however is untouched by such bias or ignorance. It is learnt just as taught under guidance of a capable preceptor, and transmitted in a similar way. Ancient tradition is therefore preserved, and its central import is not vitiated. The very scripture that reveals the ultimate truth, itself exhorts a sincere student to seek the refuge of a Guru or Âchārya in order to understand its true import!

आचार्यवान् पुरुषः वेद तत्त्वम्

ācāryavān puruṣaḥ vêda tattvam

*"The one who seeks an Âchārya comprehends  
the Supreme Truth called Brahman!"*

-Chândogya Upanishad

तत् विज्ञानार्थम् स गुरुं एव अभिगच्छेत् ।

tat vijñānārtham sa guruṃ ēva abhigacchēt .

*"For the sake of knowing Brahman, approach a Guru!"*

-Mundaka Upanishad

In all endeavors to reach the Supreme Bhagavān Nārāyana, servitude to an Āchārya becomes essential. It is therefore stated by the scriptures and averred by the wise that, in every single case, the only way of securing Moksha is by resorting to an Āchārya!

आचार्यवत्तया मोक्षं आमनन्ति स्मरन्ति च ।

इहामुत्र च तत्पादौ शरणं देशिका विदुः ॥

ācāryavattayā mōkṣaṃ āmananti smaranti ca .

ihāmutra ca tatpāḍau śaraṇaṃ dēśikā viduḥ ..

*"The Vēdās as well as Smritis declare that Moksha is attained by resorting to an Āchārya. The Guru knows that in this world and the one beyond, the feet of the Āchārya are alone the savior and the goal!"*

-Rahasya Traya Sāram, Chapter 31

नारायणोऽपि विकृतिं याति गुरोः प्रच्युतस्य दुर्बुद्धेः ।

कमलं जलादपेतं शोषयति रविर्न तोषयति ॥

nārāyaṇōpi vikṛtiṃ yāti gurōḥ pracyutasya durbuddhēḥ .

kamalaṃ jalādapētaṃ śōṣayati ravirna tōṣayati .

*"Even Lord Nārāyana will not be compassionate towards an ignorant one who is without a Guru. Just as the sun will not help blossom, but will only cause the lotus to wither if it has left its abode in water!"*

-Prapanna Pārijāta, Chapter 4

मणिवर इव शौरेर्नित्यहृद्योऽपि जीवः

कलुषमतिरविन्दन् किङ्करत्वाधिराज्यम् ।

विधिपरिणतिभेदाद् वीक्षितस्तेन काले

गुरुपरिषदुपज्ञं प्राप्य गोपायति स्वम् ॥

maṇivara iva śaurēṇityahr̥dyōpi jīvaḥ  
kaluṣamatiravindan kiṅkaratvādhirājyam  
vidhipariṇatibhēdād vīkṣitastēna kālē  
gurupariṣadupajñam prāpya gōpāyati svam ..

*"Though the Jeeva is ever dear to the Lord, just as His Kausthubha gem, yet owing to ignorance, the Jeeva fails to attain the supreme state of servitude to Him. Being favoured by His one glance, at the turn of fortune, the Jeeva attains the knowledge of His real nature. This become possible only by imbibing the teachings of the traditional succession of Gurus, and through this the Jeeva attains protection!*

-Rahasya Traya Saaram

The importance of learning at the feet of a preceptor can never be over emphasised. As long as one obtains knowledge of the Vēdā from a qualified preceptor, who in turn obtained instruction from the traditional succession of preceptors, the central 'qunitessential' import of the Vēdānta are learnt in their true sense. As long as one begets the grace of a Guru, all objects of human pursuit become well accomplished, including the attainment of the ultimate goal-moksha!

**Âchāryanishta - an Âchārya can help overcome any hurdle:**

When the benevolent grace of an Âchārya is sought as the means to effect bestowal of ultimate good, the path adopted is called 'Âchāryanishta'. Nishta means 'depending on'. In securing Moksha, the efficacy of the grace of an Âchārya is exceptional and matchless. There is certainly no doubt whatsoever in the redemption of those who depend on the Âchārya for deliverance. An Âchārya can help one overcome any hurdle. This is delineated by Swāmi Deśika in the following beautiful verse:

अन्धोऽनन्धग्रहणवशगो याति रङ्गेश यद्वत्  
 पङ्गुनौकाकुहरनिहितो नीयते नाविकेन ।  
 भुङ्क्ते भोगान् अविदितनृपः सेवकस्यार्भकादिः  
 त्वत्संप्राप्तौ प्रभवति तथा देशिको मे दयालुः ॥

andhōnandhagrahaṇavaśagō yāti raṅgēśa yadvat  
 paṅgumaukākuharanihitō nīyatē nāvikēna .  
 bhuṅktē bhōgān aviditanṛpaḥ sēvakasyārbhakādīḥ  
 tvatsamprāptau prabhavati tathā dēśikō mē dayāluḥ ..

*“Just as a blind person seeks the help of one with  
 good vision; as a lame person entrusts himself  
 with a boatman who helps him into the boat and  
 ferries him across; as the children and dependants  
 of a King’s servant enjoy the royal pleasures  
 without knowing the King; so too in order to attain  
 You, O Lord Ranga, my all-compassionate  
 Âchārya alone is the capable means!”*

-Nyāsa Tilakam 21

There are three types of individuals cited as examples here. The first is a blind man. He represents one who lacks the knowledge of what constitutes the right path and what constitutes the ultimate goal. The vision of the Âchārya helps such an individual to reach the final good.

The second is that of a lame man. He represents one who may have the necessary knowledge, but lacks the capacity to reach his destination. Using his own might, the compassionate Âchārya is able to carry such a person to the correct destination.

The third example is that of the dependants of the King’s servants. The children of a King’s servant may not even be aware of who the King is, yet they are the beneficiaries of all the royal gifts

and pleasures bestowed by the King. This situation represents one who has neither the knowledge nor the capacity. Even in such a case, it is the connection with one's Âchārya that leads to the ultimate good.

All living entities fall into one or the other of these categories. An Âchārya helps overcome any or all hurdles that may prevent one from attaining the Supreme Lord. 'Âchāryanishta' is therefore an infallible means!

**Who qualifies as an Âchārya? The importance of seeking a bonafide Âchārya:**

It is very important, however, to identify a bonafide and qualified preceptor for the purpose of instruction and seeking refuge. But the real question is- who qualifies as an Âchārya?

The word 'Âchārya' literally means 'the one who knows the Âchāra' i.e. the teachings; in this case specifically relating to the esoteric teachings of the Vêdās. But mere knowledge of the scriptures is not enough to give one the status of an Âchārya, for it is important that he inculcates the same knowledge in his way of life and practices the very same dharma as taught by the scriptures!

आचिनोति हि शास्त्राणि आचारे स्थापयत्यपि ।

स्वयमाचरते यस्मात् तस्मादाचार्य उच्यते ॥

ācinōti hi śāstrāṇi ācāre sthāpayatyapi .

svayamācaratē yasmāt tasmādācārya uchyatē..

*"The preceptor who establishes the right conduct according to the dictum of the scriptures, who teaches the same and also practices the same is the one who qualifies as an Âchārya!"*

-As quoted in Rahasya Ratnāvali

सामान्यतो विशेषाच्च यस्माद्धर्मान् सनातनान् ।  
आचिनोति स आचार्यः तस्मै द्रुह्येन्न किञ्चन ॥

sāmānyatō viśēṣācca yasmāddharmān sanātanān .  
ācinōti sa ācāryaḥ tasmai druhyēna kiñcana ..

*"He is one's Āchārya, who bestows knowledge by practice as well as precept, and from whom one has obtained the eternal Dharma, in general and in specific terms! One must never betray such an Āchārya!"*

-Prapanna Pārijāta, Chapter 4

Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika, in the following verse, beautifully enlists fourteen hallmarks of one who can qualify as an Āchārya

सिद्धं सत्संप्रदाये स्थिरधियमनघं श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठं  
सत्त्वस्थं सत्यवाचं समयनियतया साधुवृत्त्या समेतम् ।  
डम्भासूयादिमुक्तं जितविषयिगणं दीर्घबन्धुं दयालुं  
स्खालित्ये शासितारं स्वपरहितपरं देशिकं भूष्णुरीप्सेत् ॥

siddham satsampradāyē sthiradhiyamanagham śrōtriyaṁ brahmaniṣṭham .  
sattvastham satyavācam samayanīyatayā sādhuvr̥tṭyā samētam .  
ḍambhāsūyādimuktaṁ jitaviṣayigaṇaṁ dīrghabandhuṁ dayāluṁ  
skhālitīē śāsītāraṁ svapara hitaparaṁ dēśikaṁ bhūṣṇurīpsēt ..

*"A person who seeks prosperity must wish to attain an Āchārya who is firmly rooted in the 'correct tradition', who has steadfast faith, is pure in thought and deed, has mastered the Vêdās, is firm in devotion to the Supreme Brahman, is established in Sattva Guna, always speaks the truth, has adopted a mode of life in accordance to that of the righteous, who is untouched by qualities such as pomp and jealousy, who keeps his senses under check, treats the disciple like a friend at all times, is all compassionate, prevents a disciple from going astray and always keeps in mind the welfare of others and of himself!"*

-Nyāsa Vimśati 1

A 'Bhooshnu' is one who desires eternal prosperity or 'Moksha'. Such an individual must wish for the guidance of an Âchārya with the above enumerated characteristics.

One important thing must be noted here- the grace of an Âchārya is not easily attained by all. A person may run hither and thither searching for a qualified Guru, however, until one has the blessing of Lord Nārāyana Himself, it is impossible to attain the grace of an Âchārya. The scriptures say:

ईश्वरस्य च सौहार्दे यदृच्छासुकृतं तथा ।  
 विष्णोः कटाक्षमद्वेषमाभिमुख्यं च सात्त्विकैः ।  
 संभाषणं षडेतानि ह्याचार्यप्राप्तिहेतवः ।

Īśvarasya ca sauhārd yadṛcchāsukṛtaṁ tathā .  
 viṣṇōḥ kaṭākṣamadvēṣamābhimukhyaṁ ca sātvikaiḥ .  
 sambhāṣaṇaṁ ṣaḍētāni hyācāryapṛāptihētavaḥ .

*"Goodwill of the Supreme Lord, the unintended accumulation of merit by some chance, one benevolent side glance of Lord Vishnu, absence of indifference towards the Lord, developing a desire towards Him and lastly, interaction with the Sāttvik god-minded people; these six factors are the cause for one to beget the grace of an Âchārya!"*

The benevolent glance of the Lord ensures that we beget the grace of an Âchārya. The abounding grace of the Âchārya then ensures that we attain the Lord! The Âchārya becomes the boat to ferry us safely across the ocean of Samsāra, to our ultimate destination- Lord Śrīman Nārāyana! Such is the purport. Note that the word 'Ipsêt' (meaning 'wish to obtain') has been used by Swāmi Deśika. One can only wish to obtain the grace of an Âchārya. The Lord bestows that invaluable gift only to one whom He has decided to save!

The fourteen distinguishing characteristics of one who qualifies as an Âchārya are herein explained:

Sthiradheeyam- one who is steadfast; the Guru must have unshakable faith in the Lord, in the scriptures and in the teachings of the previous Âchāryas.

Anagham- the Guru must be 'pure' or sinless in thought, speech and actions.

Shrotriyam- one who is well versed in the 'Shruti', the Guru must be proficient in the Vēdā and its auxillary texts.

Brahmanishtam- one who is firmly devoted to the Supreme Brahman.

Satvastham- one who is rooted in Sattva Guna. Sattva is the quality that generates knowledge and happiness. It is free from any impurity whatsoever. When one is rooted in Sattva, it prevails over the qualities of Rajas and Tamas. It is a state that leads to a steady mental disposition, where one is able to transcend the dualities of life – pleasure/pain, joy/grief, pleasant/unpleasant, honor/dishonor, like/dislike etc. Such a person is capable of developing a mind of balanced nature, which then allows for unswerving devotion to be directed towards a single object- the Supreme Brahman.

Satya Vācham- he should speak only the truth; Satya is that which when spoken bestows the highest good to all. As defined in the Mahābhārata (Vanaparva 208-4) - *Yad Bhuta hitam atyantam tat satyam iti dhārana*; those words which are spoken for the welfare of all living creatures constitute Satya. It is therefore the absence of a tendency to injure others by speech, thoughts and action.

Samaya Niyatayā Sādhu Vrittya Sametham- One who has adopted (Sametham) a mode of living or conduct (Vritti) that is in complete

accordance (Niyatayā) with that of the righteous (Sādhū) and also with the precept of the doctrine he follows (Samaya).

Dhambāsooyādi Muktaṁ- he must be free from 'Dhamba' and 'Asooya'. Dhamba means feigning- the Guru must not practice dharma for the purpose of winning fame and glory. One must not display qualities they possess for the purpose of gaining virtue, also one must not feign qualities to impress others. Asooya means displeasure with the merits and happiness of others. A Guru must harbor the qualities of empathy and humility!

Jita-vishaya Gaṇam- one who keeps the senses under check.

Deerghabandhum- one who is eternally like a relative or friend; the Guru treats his disciple like his own relative or friend. The Supreme Lord Krishna revealed the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna, whom He considered as devotee and friend!

Dayālum- he must be compassionate towards all beings.

Skālithye Shāsitāram- Skālitha is one who falters or blunders, Shāsitha means to correct or direct; the Guru must correct the disciple when there is a tendency to waver from the right path.

Svaparahitaparam- he must always keep in mind the welfare of others and of himself; 'of himself' means of the position he holds, of the doctrine he teaches and of the tradition he represents.

And most importantly, Sat Sampradāye Siddham- the Āchārya must be firmly rooted in the 'correct tradition'.

### **How do we recognize a Sat Sampradāya?**

In order for us to understand clearly the true meanings of the Vêdānta, we must seek knowledge from an Āchārya who belongs to the disciplinic succession of what is called 'Sat Sampradāya'.

‘Sampradāya’ means a tradition. ‘Sat’ means that which is right or correct. ‘Sat Sampradāya’ therefore means ‘correct tradition’.

Note that ‘Sat’ also means reality or truth. So a ‘correct tradition’ is one which teaches the established truth. The established truth is contained in the Vêdānta and the same is taught in the Itihāsa, select portions of the Purānās, the dharma sutras and such other auxillary texts. Collectively these texts are called ‘Shāstras’. The Shāstras are the injunctions of the Supreme Lord and therefore qualify as the foremost source of the established truth. The Lord Himself states:

तस्मात् शास्त्रं प्रमाणम् ।

tasmāt śāstraṃ pramāṇam .

*‘Let the Shāstras be the authority...’*

-Bhagavad Gita, 16-24

With respect to the welfare of mankind, the scriptures have the compassion that is even superior to the compassion of thousands of mothers’ put together! In deciding what is to be accepted and what is not to be accepted, the Shāstras alone are the authority. Therefore, a Guruparampara or tradition that teaches the injunction of the scriptures is alone the ‘Sat Sampradāya’. In this regard, Sat also means ‘good’. Since the Shāstras lay injunctions for the benefit of the whole universe, a tradition that teaches those benevolent injunctions qualifies as the ‘Sat Sampradāya’. The Shāstras also teach the ‘Tattva’ or the ‘Ultimate truth’, the ‘Hita’ or ‘means’ to attain the Supreme goal; and verily the ‘Purushārtha’ or the ‘Supreme goal’. A Sat Sampradāya therefore teaches the same Tattva, Hita, and Purushārtha in a clear and flawless manner. A Sat Sampradāya is the tradition which teaches the ‘established truth’, the tradition that is ‘correct’ and therefore the tradition that is verily ‘good’ for mankind.

A Parampara (or tradition) that is not based on the Shāstra (or scripture) is not valid. There can be a tradition that hands over a particular teaching through a discipline succession, however if such a tradition is not based on the dictum of the scriptures then it is bereft of authority! There is no point in mere tradition if it is devoid of the authority of the scriptures.

So also, the Shāstra that is not obtained from a Parampara is also invalid. If scripture is learnt without the means of an established tradition, such knowledge is invalid. It is not possible to understand the scripture in its true sense without its correct interpretation. Correct interpretation requires learning from an established tradition that teaches the true dictum of the scriptures.

Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika says:

सत्संप्रदाय रहितमान शास्त्रत्ताल् अर्थनिर्णयम् दुष्करम्  
सुकरम् तानागिलुम् उपयुक्तं आगादु

satsampradāya rahitamāna śāstrattāl artha nirṇayam duṣkaram  
sukaram tānāgilum upayuktaṁ āgādu

*"The quintessential knowledge of the esoteric scriptures cannot be acquired without imbibing it from correct tradition. Although a path bereft of correct tradition may seem easy, its fruits are useless!"*

-Sampradāya Parishuddhi  
(Tamil in Devanagari script above)

In essence, knowledge of the scriptures is to be gained by means of a 'Sat Sampradāya' or correct tradition. The Sampradāya or tradition that is based on the correct teachings of Vêdānta alone qualifies as 'Sat-Sampradāya' or correct tradition.

If we say that knowledge of the Tattva, Hita, Purushārtha can be obtained only from a Sad-Āchārya; a Sad-Āchārya is one who has obtained the knowledge of the Shāstras from a Sat Sampradāya; and

that a Sat Sampradāya is founded on the injunction of the scriptures; then the question arises as to how such a tradition begins in the first place?

This is where the role of Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa as the primal preceptor becomes important! This is also where the role of 'Avatāra Puruṣhas' as preceptors in the further propagation and protection of the 'Sanātana Dharma' becomes important to understand.

The Sampradāya or tradition of twelve Âṣvārs followed by the lineage of Âchāryas starting with Nāthamuni carries forth the same quintessential truths propounded by the Vêdā and Vêdānta, even as revealed and taught by the Supreme Lord Himself. This tradition begins with Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa as the foremost Âchārya. He teaches the established truth. This established truth is then passed through the unbroken lineage of preceptors to their disciples. The unbroken line of preceptors comprises of 'Avatāra Puruṣhas' who become the emissaries of Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa. Therefore such a tradition is referred to as Sat-Sampradāya; 'the correct tradition'!

When one obtains knowledge through the system of Sat-Sampradāya, there will be no inconsistencies in the truths realized. An Âchārya of such a Sat-Sampradāya is adept at helping the disciples differentiate truth from non-truth and therefore helps them realize the quintessential meanings!

Another characteristic feature of a Sat Sampradāya is that such a tradition is passed on from a preceptor only to a student who is intent upon receiving it and who is qualified to do so. It is not passed on to a person who does not wish to listen or to one who has no faith. The Âchārya tests the intent and qualifications of a disciple by means of rigorous and persistent measures and only then shares the quintessential truths with one who is capable and worthy of receiving it.

अधिजिगमिषुराद्यं धाम दिव्यं त्रिधाम्नः  
श्रुतविविधपरीक्षाशोधिते क्वापि पात्रे ।  
अनघगुणदशायां आहितस्नेहमार्यः  
प्रदिशति निरपायं संप्रदायप्रदीपम् ॥

adhijigamiṣurādyam dhāma divyam tridhāmnah  
śrutavividhaparīkṣāśōdhitē kvāpi pātrē .  
anaghagunaḍaśāyām āhitasnēhamāryah  
pradiśati nirapāyam sampradāyapradīpam ..

*"The revered Âchārya who seeks to attain the divine  
Supreme Abode, lights with true affection, the  
imperishable lamp of spiritual tradition in a worthy  
disciple, who has been found fit after being tested  
in various ways as laid by the scriptures, and who  
is in a state of possessing blemishless qualities!"*

-Rahasya Traya Sāra, Chapter 31

The very act of imparting scriptural instruction itself leads to the attainment of the Supreme Abode of Vishnu. However, only if such teaching has been given to a worthy disciple! This is the great responsibility on the part of the preceptor of an impeccable tradition - that instruction may be parted only to one who is qualified to and intends to receive it. The Âchārya tests the disciple, prior to instruction, in order to affirm that the disciple is one who possesses no bad qualities and harbors no evil towards anyone. The Âchārya imparts the teaching only to a disciple who has faith, who is virtuous, who reveres the injunctions of the scriptures, who does not resort to vain argumentation, who performs his ordained duties enduring the difficulties that arise from such action, who is intent only on doing good to the world, who has noble virtues such as patience and compassion to all creatures, one who has subdued his

that a Sat Sampradāya is founded on the injunction of the scriptures; then the question arises as to how such a tradition begins in the first place?

This is where the role of Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa as the primal preceptor becomes important! This is also where the role of 'Avatāra Puruṣhas' as preceptors in the further propagation and protection of the 'Sanātana Dharma' becomes important to understand.

The Sampradāya or tradition of twelve Âḷvārs followed by the lineage of Âchāryas starting with Nāthamuni carries forth the same quintessential truths propounded by the Vêdā and Vêdānta, even as revealed and taught by the Supreme Lord Himself. This tradition begins with Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa as the foremost Âchārya. He teaches the established truth. This established truth is then passed through the unbroken lineage of preceptors to their disciples. The unbroken line of preceptors comprises of 'Avatāra Puruṣhas' who become the emissaries of Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa. Therefore such a tradition is referred to as Sat-Sampradāya; 'the correct tradition'!

When one obtains knowledge through the system of Sat-Sampradāya, there will be no inconsistencies in the truths realized. An Âchārya of such a Sat-Sampradāya is adept at helping the disciples differentiate truth from non-truth and therefore helps them realize the quintessential meanings!

Another characteristic feature of a Sat Sampradāya is that such a tradition is passed on from a preceptor only to a student who is intent upon receiving it and who is qualified to do so. It is not passed on to a person who does not wish to listen or to one who has no faith. The Âchārya tests the intent and qualifications of a disciple by means of rigorous and persistent measures and only then shares the quintessential truths with one who is capable and worthy of receiving it.

अधिजिगमिषुराद्यं धाम दिव्यं त्रिधाम्नः  
श्रुतविविधपरीक्षाशोधिते क्वापि पात्रे ।  
अनघगुणदशायां आहितस्नेहमार्यः  
प्रदिशति निरपायं संप्रदायप्रदीपम् ॥

adhijigamiṣurādyam dhāma divyam tridhāmnah  
śrutavividhaparīkṣāśōdhitē kvāpi pātrē .  
anaghaguṇadaśāyām āhitasnēhamāryaḥ  
pradiśati nirapāyam sampradāyapradīpam ..

*"The revered Āchārya who seeks to attain the divine Supreme Abode, lights with true affection, the imperishable lamp of spiritual tradition in a worthy disciple, who has been found fit after being tested in various ways as laid by the scriptures, and who is in a state of possessing blemishless qualities!"*

-Rahasya Traya Sāra, Chapter 31

The very act of imparting scriptural instruction itself leads to the attainment of the Supreme Abode of Vishnu. However, only if such teaching has been given to a worthy disciple! This is the great responsibility on the part of the preceptor of an impeccable tradition - that instruction may be parted only to one who is qualified to and intends to receive it. The Āchārya tests the disciple, prior to instruction, in order to affirm that the disciple is one who possesses no bad qualities and harbors no evil towards anyone. The Āchārya imparts the teaching only to a disciple who has faith, who is virtuous, who reveres the injunctions of the scriptures, who does not resort to vain argumentation, who performs his ordained duties enduring the difficulties that arise from such action, who is intent only on doing good to the world, who has noble virtues such as patience and compassion to all creatures, one who has subdued his

senses, who regards all individual souls as himself, who does not vilify others, who is unconditionally devoted to his preceptor and moreover to one who is capable of grasping what is taught. The Âchārya of a Sat Sampradāya therefore guards the ancient knowledge from those who are unfit!

Enumerated below are the qualities to be cultivated by a disciple who intends to imbibe the tradition of a Sat- Sampradāya:

सद्बुद्धिः साधुसेवी समुचितचरितस्तत्त्वबोधाभिलाषी  
शुश्रूषुस्त्यक्तमानः प्रणिपतनपरः प्रश्नकालप्रतीक्षः ।  
शान्तो दान्तोऽनसूयुः शरणमुपगतः शास्त्रविश्वासशाली  
शिष्यः प्राप्तः परीक्षां कृतविदभिमतं तत्त्वतः शिक्षणीयः ॥

sadbuddhiḥ sādhusēvī samucitacaritastattvabōdhābhilāṣī  
śuśrūṣustyaktamānaḥ praṇipatanaparaḥ praśnakālapratīkṣaḥ .  
śāntō dāntō'nasūyuh śaraṇamupagataḥ śāstraviśvāsaśālī  
śiṣyaḥ prāptaḥ parīkṣām kṛtavidabhimataṁ tattvataḥ śikṣaṇīyaḥ ..

*"One who possesses a good intellect, who is intent on revering the god-minded people, who adheres to right conduct, who is desirous of knowing the supreme truths, who is willing and enthusiastic in rendering service to the Guru, who is free from the sense of self-importance, who devoutly bows and prostates before the Âchārya, who awaits the proper time and setting to clarify doubts from the Âchārya, who keeps his mind and senses under control, who is free from jealousy, who has sought total refuge at the feet of the Âchārya, who has unshakable faith in the Shāstrās, who has been tested and found fit, and one who remains eternally grateful to the Âchārya for everything that has been bestowed- a person of such disposition is alone entitled to be taught whatever he wishes to learn!"*

-Nyāsa Vimshati 3

## There is no difference between an Âchārya and the Lord:

It is said in the Vêdānta that the disciple should behave towards a Guru as he would towards the Lord Himself; he should have the same affection towards the Guru as much towards the Lord.

The teaching of the scripture is that an Âchārya is the one who leads us to Bhagavān. He connects us to Him and thereby makes the impossible possible. Without an Âchārya, it is impossible to reach the Supreme Goal. Resorting to an Âchārya essentially means that the end goal is assured. Therefore, there is no difference between an Âchārya and Lord Nārāyana. In this regard also, the Âchārya or preceptor himself is our manifest God! Vêdānta Deśika says:

अध्यासीनतुरङ्गवक्त्रविलसत्जिह्वाग्रसिंहासनात्  
आचार्यदिह देवतां समधिकां अन्यां न मन्यामहे ।  
यस्यासौ भजते कदाचिदजहद्भूमा स्वयं भूमिकां  
मग्नानां भविनां भवार्णवसमुत्ताराय नारायणः ॥

adhyāsīnaturaṅgavaktravilasatjīhvāgrasiṃhāsanaāt  
ācāryadiha dēvatāṃ samadhikāṃ anyāṃ na manyāmahē .  
yasyāsau bhajatē kadācidajahadbhūmā svayaṃ bhūmikāṃ  
magnānāṃ bhavināṃ bhavārṇavasamuttārāya nārāyaṇaḥ

*"We do not consider any God as being equal to  
or higher than Âchārya, whose tongue shines bright  
being the throne upon which is seated the  
horse faced Lord Hayagreeva. In order to save those  
devotees who are sunk in samsāra, Lord Nārāyana Himself takes  
the form of an Âchārya without giving up His supreme greatness."*

Sankalpa Suryodaya 2-63

Swāmi Deśika also enumerates eight points of similarities between the Lord and the Guru:

अज्ञानध्वान्तरोधादघपरिहरणादात्मसाम्यावहत्वात्  
जन्मप्रध्वंसिजन्मप्रदगरिमतया दिव्यदृष्टिप्रभावात् ।  
निष्प्रत्यूहानृशंस्यन्नियतरसतया नित्यशेषित्वयोगात्  
आचार्यः सद्भिर्प्रत्युपकरणधिया देववत् स्यादुपास्यः ।

ajñānadhvāntarōdhādaghapariharanādātmasāmyāvahatvāt  
janmapradhvaṃsijanmapradagarimatayā divyadr̥ṣṭiprabhāvāt .  
niṣpratyūhānṛśaṃsyaṇniyataraśatayā nityaśēṣitvayōgāt  
ācāryaḥ sadbhirapratyupakaraṇadhiyā dēvavat syādupāsyah .

*“An Āchārya must be worshipped and revered as if he is the Lord Himself, for the Lord and the Āchārya both dispell the the darkness of ignorance, destroy accumulated sins, impart qualities similar to their own, grant a life that destroys re-birth, possess efficacious divine glances, exude abounding compassion, are eternally nectarine, and are both endowed with the quality of Lordship! In doing so, the disciple must realize that the help obtained from an Āchārya is beyond recompense!”*

-Nyāsa Vimshati 2

These are the eight similarities between the Lord and Guru:

Ajnāna-dhwānta-rodhāt: removing the veil of ignorance; only the Lord and the Āchārya are capable of quelling the darkness born from ignorance.

Aghapariharanāt: so also the ability to destroy the pile of accumulated sins.

Atmasāmyāvahatwāt: while Lord Nārāyana bestows the liberated soul a status similar to Himself (Sārūpya- similarity in appearance, Sālokya- existence in the same divine abode, etc), an Âchārya also elevates the disciple to his own level. The Lord and the Âchārya therefore endeavour to transform a disciple into the likeness of themselves!

Janmapradhvamsi Janmaprada Garimatayā: both the Lord and the Âchārya possess the greatness of being capable of granting a life that destroys rebirth! It is said of the Guru:

साक्षान्मुक्तेरुपायान् यो विद्याभेदानुपादिशत् ।  
कथ्यते मोक्षशास्त्रेषु स तु श्रेष्ठतमो गुरुः ॥

sākṣānmuktērupāyān yō vīdyā bhēdānupādiśat .  
kathyatē mōkṣaśāstrēṣu sa tu śrēṣṭhatamō guruḥ .

*"The Moksha Shāstras consider him to be the greatest of Gurus, who imparts the teaching that leads us directly to Moksha!"*

-Rahasya Traya Sāram, Chapter 31

Divya drishti Prabhāvāt: both the Lord and the Âchārya possess benevolent glances that can uplift the devotee from any difficulty.

Nishpratyoohānrusamsyāt: both the Lord and the Âchārya possess the quality of boundless compassion.

Niyatarasatayā: both the Lord and the Âchārya are similar on account of possessing 'limitless sweetness'. The glory of the Lord and the glory of the Âchārya both exceed the sweetness of nectar!

Nitya-seshitva-yogāt: the Lord and the individual self share a Seshi-sesha bhāva, or the relationship of Lord and servant. So too, the

disciple must be ever subservient to the Âchârya whose noble deed of guiding the disciple is beyond recompense!

Owing to the above enlisted similarities between them, the Guru is non-different from the Lord. In fact, the scripture further declares that an Âchârya is verily the Lord Himself!

साक्षात् नारायणो देवः कृत्वा मर्त्यमयीं तनुम् ।  
मग्नान् उद्धरते लोकान् कारुण्यात् शास्त्रपाणिना ॥  
sākṣāt nārāyaṇō dēvaḥ kṛtvā martyamayīm tanum .  
magnān uddharatē lōkān kāruṇyāt śāstrapāṇinā ..

*“Verily, Lord Nārāyana Himself, out of compassion,  
descends into the world of mortals, holding the  
scriptures in His hand, in the form of an Âchârya,  
in order to uplift souls sunken in saṁsāra!”*

-Jayākya Samhita

यो विष्णोः प्रतिमाकारे लोहभावं करोति च ।  
यो गुरौ मानुषं भावं उभौ नरकपातिनौ ॥  
yō viṣṇōḥ pratimākārē lōhabhāvaṁ karōti ca .  
yō gurau mānuṣaṁ bhāvaṁ ubhau narakapātināu ..

*“Whoever sees the idols of Vishnu as merely metal, and  
whoever sees his Guru as mere human, both fall to hell!”*

-Prapanna Pārijāta, Chapter 4

गुरुरेव परः कामो गुरुरेव परं धनम् ।

गुरुरेव परा विद्या गुरुरेव परायणम् ।

गुरुरेव परं ब्रह्म गुरुरेव परा गतिः ।

यस्मात्तदुपदेष्टाऽसौ तस्माद्गुरुतरो गुरुः ॥

gururēva paraḥ kāmō gururēva paraṁ dhanam .

gururēva parā vidyā gururēva parāyaṇam .

gururēva paraṁ brahma gururēva parā gatiḥ .

yasmāttadupadēṣṭāsau tasmādgurutarō guruḥ

*"The Guru is the supreme object of desire, the Guru is the ultimate wealth, the Guru is the highest knowledge, the Guru is the principal object of devotion, the Guru is the Supreme Brahman, the Guru is the ultimate goal! Since he imparts the scriptural teaching, he is a venerable preceptor!"*

-Jayākya Samhita

### **Acharyopāsanam: Service to an Âchārya is important**

The Lord Himself declares the importance of 'Acharyopāsanam', i.e. servitude to an Âchārya in the pursuit of the highest end. In speaking of qualities worthy of being acquired for securing the supreme knowledge, the Lord says:

अमानित्वं अदम्भित्वं अहिंसा क्षान्तिरार्जवम् ।

आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यं आत्मविनिग्रहः ॥

amānitvaṁ adambhitvaṁ ahimsā ksāntirāṛjavam .

ācāryōpāsanam śaucam sthairyam ātmavinigrahaḥ ..

*"Reverence, simplicity, non-injury to others, calmness of mind, sincerity, servitude to the preceptor, purity, steadiness and self restraint!"*

- Bhagavad Gita 13-7

This 'Acharyopāsanam' or 'servitude rendered to the preceptor' means prostrating, performing service, respectfully inquiring about the truths and seeking refuge at the feet of an Âchārya.

The Lord also declares:

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।  
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्व दर्शिनः ॥  
tadviddhi praṇipātēna paripraśnēna sēvayā .  
upadēkṣyanti tē jñānaṃ jñāninastatva darśinaḥ ..

*"Learn this by bowing down to the wise, inquiring from them and by performing service to them. Those who have realized the truth will then instruct you in knowledge!"*

- Bhagavad Gita 4-34

### The importance of the praise of Âchāryas:

An Âchārya should be venerated with utmost respect and unflinching devotion at all times. The scripture mentions of an Âchārya:

अर्चनीयश्च वन्द्यश्च कीर्तनीयश्च सर्वदा ।  
ध्यायेत् जपेत् नमेत् भक्त्या भजेत् अभ्यर्चयेत् मुदा ॥  
arcanīyaśca vandyaśca kīrtanīyaśca sarvadā ..  
dhyāyēt japēt namēt bhaktyā bhajēt abhyarcayēt mudā ..

*"The Âchārya should be honored, venerated, praised, meditated upon, saluted with adoration, served with devotion, worshipped with joy and the glory of his name must be chanted at all times!"*

-Prapanna Pārijāta, Chapter 4

Vêdānta Deśika mentions in the 31<sup>st</sup> chapter of the Rahasya Traya Sāra, “The Shāstras say that the Âchārya reveals the meanings of the scriptures like one who reveals to a poor man the existence of a great treasure within his house. The disciple therefore should be ever grateful to the preceptor and never go against his wishes. The imparting of instruction and knowledge from Âchārya to a Sishya should always be preceded by meditation on the succession of Âchāryas.”

It has to be remembered that the acquisition of knowledge from an Âchārya is possible only because the previous Âchāryas in succession, out of compassion, have handed down the quintessential truths to be available to worthy disciples. Out of gratitude to the previous Âchāryas, the preceptor imparting the instruction and the student receiving it must both meditate on the succession of these Âchāryas. The greatness of the previous Âchāryas should always be meditated upon with gratitude, prior to imparting or receiving knowledge. Even in situations where knowledge has been received spontaneously or without direct interaction with an Âchārya, it is to be remembered that the grace of the Âchārya alone facilitates such favorable circumstances! At all times therefore, a disciple should be indebted to the lineage of Âchāryas for his spiritual upliftment.

### Âḷvārs and Âchāryas

So far we have enumerated the various reasons for which a Guru or an Âchārya should be revered at all times. The aforesaid reasons may be applied in a general sense to any Guru who is linked to the traditional unbroken lineage of preceptors and who reveals the teaching of the scripture. But it is important to quickly point out that the Âḷvārs and Âchāryas praised in the Divya Sūri Stuti share a distinguishing feature- these divine beings are verily the incarnations of the close attendants of Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa who serve Him at Vaikuntam! This unique and divine nature of the birth

of Âṣṭvārs and Âchāryas is called Avātara Rahasya- or the secret of their descent!

Owing to factors such as the passage of time, the quintessential teachings of the Vêdānta become lost to mankind. It is during the nadir of righteousness, when true knowledge is overpowered by ignorance, that the Lord Himself manifests in one 'Vibhava' form or the other, and re-establishes the Vêdās.

Despite this, the onset of the age of Kali has seen the rise of perverse minded people who interpret the ancient texts in a twisted manner to suit the doctrines that they themselves have contrived. Due to such handling of the Vedic texts and the works of great sages, the true import of Vêdānta is completely vitiated. The works of the great sages which recall and preserve the quintessential truths of the Vêdānta have also been rendered ineffectual. The true nature of the Supreme Brahman has been mis-represented in a distorted manner owing to the biased interpretations of these heretics and deviant thinkers. The correct form of worship and meditation has suffered, and the Supreme Brahman Himself has been divested off His supreme sovereignty. Such is the circumstance wherein truth has become mixed with lies! The common man who turns Godward and resorts to the expositions on the scriptures is completely misled by a conflation of scriptural teaching with ideas and interpretations that lack authority, and therefore becomes lost.

In such ruined times, by the grace of Bhagavān Himself, are born great devotees of His. These devotees are but manifestations of the Lord's divine weapons and His attendants who serve His feet at the highest abode at Vaikunta- the 'Nityas' and the 'Muktas'. The Nitya Sūris- the unborn souls or the Muktas- the liberated souls, descend onto this mortal earth, from time to time, so as to re-establish that primal teaching of the Vêdānta. By means of their teachings, these preceptors have revealed to us the true nature of Lord Nārāyana, His

soverignty, His auspicious qualities, the correct means of worshipping Him, and the path to be taken to reach Him. They have also revealed to us the essential Mantras, and the meaning and interpretations of these Mantras. These preceptors, inclusive of the twelve Âḷvārs followed by the Âchāryas constitute the Guru Parampara. This succession of preceptors traces its origin to the Supreme Lord Nārāyana Himself. These Âḷvārs and Âchāryas, being incarnations of the Nitya Sūris are herein collectively called as Divya Sūris.

The Bhāgavatha Mahapurana alludes to the descent of these noble souls in the age of Kali purely for the upliftment of mankind.

कलौ खलु भविष्यन्ति नारायणपरायणाः ।  
 क्वचित् क्वचित् महाभागा द्रमिडेषु च भूरिशः ॥  
 ताम्रपर्णी नदी यत्र कृतमाला पयस्विनी ।  
 कावेरी च महा पुण्या प्रतीची च महा नदी ॥  
 kalau khalu bhaviṣyanti nārāyaṇaparāyaṇāḥ  
 kvacit kvacit mahābhāgā dramiḍeṣu ca bhūrīśaḥ .  
 tāmrarnī nadī yatra kṛtamālā payasvinī .  
 kāvērī ca mahā puṇyā pratīcī ca mahā nadī .

*“O King! In the age of Kali the devotees of Lord Nārāyana will indeed take birth here and there, and in the great numbers in the Drāmida land where flow the rivers Tāmrarni, Kṛtamāla (Vaigai), Payasvini (Pālār), the sacred Kāveri, and the Mahanadi (Periyār) which runs westwards!”*

Bhāgavatham 11-5- 38,39,40

### Who are the divine attendants of Lord Nārāyana?

The daily Tiruvārādhnam of Perumāl begins only after first invoking the divine attendants of Lord Nārāyana who serve Him in Vaikuntam. The Nitya Grantham of Rāmānuja deals with the

correct method of invoking and worshipping the divine attendants of Lord Nārāyaṇa, prior to His worship.

कूर्मादीन् दिव्यलोकं तदनु मणिमयं मंटपं तत्रशेषं ।  
 तस्मिन् धर्मादि पीठं तदुपरि कमलं चामरग्राहिणीश्च ।  
 विष्णुदेवीः विभूषणायुधगणमुरगं पादुके वैनतेयं ।  
 सेनेशं द्वारपालान् कुमुदमुखगणान् विष्णुभक्तान् प्रपद्ये ॥  
 सर्वमङ्गलमूर्तये सपरिवाराय श्रीमते नारायणाय नमः ।

kūrmādīn divyalōkaṁ tadanu maṇimayaṁ maṇṭapaṁ tatraśēṣaṁ .  
 tasmin dharmādipīṭhaṁ tadupari kamalaṁ cāmaragrāhiṇīśca .  
 viṣṇumdevīḥ vibhūṣaṇāyudhagaṇamuragaṁ pādukē vainatēyaṁ .  
 sēnēśaṁ dvārapālān kumudamukhagaṇān viṣṇubhaktān prapadyē ..  
 sarvamaṅgaḷamūrtayē saparivārāya śrīmatē nārāyaṇāya namaḥ .

*"I meditate on (Lord Nārāyaṇa in the form of) the tortoise, bearing on its back the entire universe, including the divine world (of Vaikuntam), in which there exists a pavilion with four pillars represented by Dharma and others, studded with precious gems, and Ādisesha resting inside; a lotus flower situated on top of Ādisesha, and the ladies offering the Chamara service situated on (the eight petals of) the lotus; the Lord Himself seated on the lotus flower with His consorts, all being decked in numerous divine ornaments and resplendent with appropriate divine weapons and with the divine Pādukas; with Garuda, Senesha, the Dvārapālās, and numerous other attendants headed by Kumuda; and various other devotees of Lord Nārāyaṇa! I surrender to the most auspicious form of Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa along with His entourage!"*

- Saccharita Raksha

The Pancharatra Âgama gives the following description of Vaikuntam:

Lord Nārāyana Himself in the form of a tortoise bears on His back the fourteen worlds of the universe. Above these fourteen worlds, even beyond the realm of Brahma and other such exalted beings, is the eternal abode of Vaikuntam. At the center of Vaikuntam there exists a large pavilion supported by four pillars. The feet of these four pillars are represented by Dharma or justice, Jnāna or knowledge, Vairagya or renunciation, and Aishwarya or opulence. The outside of this pavilion is studded with numerous divine gems. Sesha or the divine serpent rests within this pavilion in a circular coiled manner. Mounted on top of the coils of Sesha is a divine lotus flower. The eight petals of this lotus flower are the support for the ladies performing the 'Chamara' service to the Lord and His consorts. The Lord Himself is seated at the center of this lotus alongside His consorts Śree, Bhu and Nila! The Lord and His consorts are decked with appropriate divine garments and ornaments such as crown, ear rings, waist belt, the mark of Śreevatsa, the Kausthuba jewel, the Vanamāla garland and numerous such others. The Lord bears divine weapons that are completely appropriate to Him- the discus Sudarshana, the conch Pāñchajanya, the mace Kaumodaki, the sword Nandaka, the bow Sāranga, and such others. The Lord and His consorts are also decked with the divine Pādukas. They are served by Garuda, Senesha or Vishwakshena and a host of other attendants such as Kumuda, Kumudāksha, Pundarika, Vāmana, Sankukarna, Sarpanetra, Sumukha, and Suprathista - who guard the eight directions; and eight gate keepers Chanda-Prachanda, Bhadra-Subhadra, Dhatra-Vidhatra and Jaya-Vijaya guarding the four doors of Vaikuntam!

It is these attendants of Lord Nārāyana who, in compliance with His wishes, take birth on this earth among humans as our saviors.

## The praise of Âḷvārs and Âchāryas: Divya Sūri Stotra

The Divya Sūri Stotra is a hymn in praise of our Guruparampara. It reminds us of the greatness of the individual preceptors in this unbroken succession of Âchāryas. It has been composed out of gratitude towards these noble souls who took birth for the benefit of mankind. The praise of these Âḷvārs and Âchāryas directly leads us to Lord Nārāyana, and bestows the ultimate goal of life- Moksha.

अशिथिलगुरुभक्तिस्तत्प्रशंसादिशीलः  
प्रचुरबहुमतिस्तद्वस्तुवास्त्वादिकेऽपि ।  
गुणवति विनियोक्तुं गोपयन्संप्रदायं  
कृतविदनघवृत्तिः किं न विन्देन्निधानम् ॥

aśīthilagurubhaktistatpraśamsādiśīlah  
pracurabahumatistadvastuvāstvādikēapi .  
guṇavati viniyōkṭum gōpayansampradāyaṁ  
kṛtavidanaghavṛttiḥ kiṁ na vindēnnidhānam ..

*“Steadfast in devotion to the Guru; intent upon praising his glory; filled with regard for his house, property and other such things; preserving the traditional doctrine and imparting it only to one who is worthy; such a disciple who is respectful and performs the ordained duties, which great treasure will he not attain?”*

- Sankalpa Suryodaya 2-64

The lineage of preceptors in all Śree Vaishnava traditions begins with the most immediate preceptor, and then traces back upwards all the way to Lord Nārāyana along with Śree. It is Vishwaksena, or the chief commander of Lord Vishnu’s mighty army, that links the Âchārya Parampara from the Nitya Vibhuti (the eternal abode) to the Leela Vibhuti (the material world). Since Vishwaksena manifested before Nammāḷvār and initiated him with the mantras

and their meanings, the doctrine of Vêdânta became established upon this earth in the age of Kali.

The Divya Sûri Stuti is a unique hymn that praises not only the Âchârya Parampara, but by revealing the Avatâra Rahasya of each preceptor it also eulogizes the eternal attendants of Śree Hari who serve Him. In fact, it is important to meditate upon these Nitya Sûris prior to the worship of Śree and Nārāyana. This has been clearly indicated in the scriptural texts.

The Lord Himself declares to Viswaksena:

लक्ष्म्यां मयि च युष्मसु भक्तो यो भुवि दुर्लभः

lakṣmyāṁ mayi ca yuṣmasu bhaktō yō bhuvi durlabhaḥ ..

*"A devotee worshipping Me, Goddess Lakshmi,  
and all of you is indeed rare in this world"*

-Pancharatra, Vishwaksena Samhita

So too, it is important to meditate on the entire lineage of Âchâryas, including our immediate Guru and all the way up to the foremost preceptor Lord Śrīman Nārāyana. Each Âchârya in the lineage has to be known and has to be meditated upon. It is due to the grace of every Âchârya in the unbroken chain that we are able to now study and comprehend the doctrinal tenets. Furthermore, every Âchârya has individually contributed for the growth and preservation of ancient tradition. It is therefore our duty to know about and to worship every Âchârya in the spiritual lineage. This is a scriptural dictum also:

स चाचार्यवंश्यो ज्ञेयो भवति, आचार्याणामसावसावित्या भगवत्तः इति ।

sa cācāryavaṁśyō jñēyō bhavati, ācāryāṇāmasāvasāvityā bhagavattaḥ iti

*"The entire lineage of Âchârya's is to be known  
and worshipped. Starting with one's own Âchârya, to  
his Âchârya and so on, all the way upto Bhagavān; thus!"*

-Rahasyāmnāya Brāhmanam

The Divya Sūri Stuti is a hymn which delineates and worships the chief individual preceptors of Âḷvār Âchārya Parampara. The Nitya Sūris who descend onto earth in a human form, as preceptors, become referred to as Divya Sūris. Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar has composed the work Divya Sūri Stuti in praise of these preceptors who link us to Pramātna through the means of an impeccable unbroken chain. The Divya Sūri Stotram achieves a unique fivefold objective:

- 1) Eulogy of the Âḷvārs and Âchāryas,
- 2) Indicating their Avatāra Rahasya,
- 3) Establishing the unbroken traditional lineage of preceptors
- 4) Indicating their Tirunakshatrams
- 5) And, simultaneously worshipping Lord Śrīman Nārāyana along with His divine weapons and the entire retinue of His close attendants

For a Śree Vāishnava, the worship of Âḷvārs and Âchāryas is an 'Anushtāna' - a term used to describe 'a constant performance' or a daily religious practice that one must necessarily engage in. The Divya Sūri Stuti helps in the performance of such Anushtāna. The Divya Sūri Stuti is therefore an 'all-fulfilling' hymn that serves as a powerful and potent elixir for the maladies of mundane existence and as a ferry to easily cross the great ocean of Samsāra.



श्री śrī

श्री ब्रह्मतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रस्वामि विरचित  
śrī brahmatantrasvatantrasvāmi viracita

## दिव्यसूरिस्तोत्रम् Divyasūristrōtram

श्रीमान् वेङ्कटनाथार्यः कवितार्किककेसरी ।  
वेदान्ताचार्यवर्यो मे संनिधत्तां सदा हृदि ॥  
śrīmān vēṅkaṭanāthāryaḥ kavitārkika kēsari .  
vēdāntācāryavaryō mē sannidhattām sadā hṛdi ..

श्रीमल्लक्ष्मणयोगीन्द्रसिद्धान्तविजयध्वजम् ।  
विश्वामित्रकुलोद्भूतं वरदार्यमहं भजे ॥  
śrīmallaṣṭmaṇayōgīndrasiddhāntavijayadhvajam .  
viśvāmitrakulōdbhūtam varadāryamaham bhajē ..

पर्यायभाष्यकाराय प्रणतार्तिं विधून्वते ।  
ब्रह्मतन्त्रस्वतन्त्राय द्वितीयब्रह्मणे नमः ॥  
paryāyabhāṣyakāraya praṇatārtiṃ vidhūnvatē .  
brahmatantrasvatantrāya dvitīyabrahmaṇē namaḥ ..



श्रीमद् वेदान्तसिद्धान्तस्थापनानित्यदीक्षितम् ।

श्रीमन् नारायणं वन्दे भान्तं सूरिगुरुत्तमैः ॥ १

śrīmad vēdāntasiddhāntasthāpanānityadīkṣitam .

śrīman nārāyaṇaṁ vandē bhāntaṁ sūrigurūttamaiḥ .. 1

तुलायां श्रवणे जातं काञ्च्यां काञ्चनवारिजात् ।

द्वापरे पाञ्चजन्यांशं सरोयोगिनमाश्रये ॥ २

tulāyāṁ śravaṇē jātaṁ kāñcyāṁ kāñcanavārijāt .

dvāparē pāñcajanyaṁśaṁ sarōyōginamāśrayē .. 2

तुलाश्रविष्ठासंभूतं भूतं कल्लोलमालिनः ।

तीरे फुल्लोत्पलात् मल्लपुर्या ईडे गदांशकम् ॥ ३

tulāśraviṣṭhasambhūtaṁ bhūtaṁ kallōlamālinaḥ .

tīrē phullōtpalāt mallapuryāṁ īḍē gadāṁśakam .. 3

तुला शतभिषक् जातं मयूरपैरिकैरवात् ।

महान्तं महदाख्यातं वन्दे श्रीनन्दकांशकम् ॥ ४

tulā śatabhiṣak jātaṁ mayūrapurikairavāt

mahāntaṁ mahadākhyātaṁ vandē śrīnandakāṁśakam .. 4

मखायां मकरे मासे चक्रांशं भार्गवोद्भवम् ।

महीसारपुराधीशं भक्तिसारं अहं भजे ॥ ५

makhāyāṁ makarē māsē cakrāṁśaṁ bhārgavōdbhavam .

mahīsarapurādhiśaṁ bhaktisāraṁ ahaṁ bhajāē .. 5

वैशाखे तु विशाखायां कुरुकापुरिकारिजम् ।  
पाण्ड्यदेशे कलेरआदौ शठारिं सैन्यपं भजे ॥ ६

vaiśākhē tu viśākhāyāṃ kurukāpurikārijam .  
pāṇḍyadēśē kalērādaū śaṭhāriṃ sainyapaṃ bhajāē .. 6

चैत्रे चित्रा समुद्भूतं पाण्ड्यदेशे गणांशकम् ।  
श्रीपराङ्कुशसद्भक्तं मधुरम् कविमाश्रये ॥ ७

caitrē citrā samudbhūtaṃ pāṇḍyadēśē gaṇāṃśakam .  
śrīparāṅkuśasadbhaktaṃ madhuram kavimāśrayē .. 7

कुम्भे पुनर्वसूभवं केरळे कोळपट्टणे ।  
कौस्तुभांशं धराधीशं कुलशेखरमाश्रये ॥ ८

kumbhē punarvasūbhavaṃ kēraḷē kōḷapaṭṭaṇē .  
kaustubhāṃśaṃ dharādhiśaṃ kulaśēkharamāśrayē .. 8

ज्येष्ठे स्वातीभवं विष्णुरथांशं धन्विनःपुरे ।  
प्रपद्ये श्वशुरं विष्णोः विष्णुचित्तं पुरःशिखम् ॥ ९

jyēṣṭhē svātībhavaṃ viṣṇurathāṃśaṃ dhanvinaḥpurē .  
prapadyē śvaśuraṃ viṣṇōḥ viṣṇucittaṃ puraḥśikham .. 9

आषाढे पूर्वफल्गुण्यां तुलसीकाननोद्भवाम् ।  
पाण्ड्ये विश्वंभरां गोदां वन्दे श्रीरंगनायिकाम् ॥ १०

āṣāḍhē pūrvaphalgunyāṃ tulasīkānanōdbhavām .  
pāṇḍyē viśvambharāṃ gōdāṃ vandē śrīraṅganāyikām .. 10

कोदण्डे ज्येष्ठनक्षत्रे मण्डण्गुडिपुरोद्भवम् ।

चोळोर्व्यां वनमालांशं भक्ताङ्घ्रिरेणुमाश्रये ॥ ११

kōdaṇḍē jyēṣṭhanakṣatrē maṇḍaṅguḍipurōdbhavam .  
cōḷōrvyāṃ vanamālāṃśaṃ bhaktāṅghrirēṇumāśrayē .. 11

कार्तिके रोहिणीजातं श्रीपाणं निचुळापुरे ।

श्रीवत्सांशं गायकेन्द्रं मुनिवाहनमाश्रये ॥ १२

kārtikē rōhiṇījātaṃ śrīpāṇaṃ nicuḷāpurē .  
śrīvatsāṃśaṃ gāyakēndraṃ munivāhanamāśrayē .. 12

कार्तिके कृत्तिकाजातं चतुष्कविशिखामणिम् ।

षट्प्रबन्धकृतं शाङ्गमूर्तिं कलियमाश्रये ॥ १३

kārtikē kṛttikājātaṃ catuṣkaviśikhāmaṇim .  
ṣaṭprabandhakṛtaṃ śāṅgamūrtiṃ kaliyamāśrayē .. 13

ज्येष्ठे अनूराधासंभूतं वीरनारायणे पुरे ।

गजवक्त्रांशमाचार्यं आद्यं नाथमुनिं भजे ॥ १४

jyēṣṭhē anūrādhāsambhūtaṃ vīranārāyaṇē purē .  
gajavaktrāṃśamācāryaṃ ādyaṃ nāthamuniṃ bhajāē .. 14

आषाढे च उत्तराषाढसंभूतं तत्र वै पुरे ।

सिंहासनांशं विख्यातं श्री यामुन मुनिं भजे ॥ १५

āṣāḍhē ca uttarāṣāḍhasambhūtaṃ tatra vai purē .  
siṃhāsanāṃśaṃ vikhyātaṃ śrī yāmuna munim bhajāē .. 15

चैत्रार्द्रा संभवं विष्णोः दर्शनस्थापनोत्सुकम् ।

तुण्डीरमण्डले शेषमूर्तिं रामानुजं भजे ॥ १६

caitrārdrā sambhavam viṣṇoḥ darśanasthāpanōtsukam .

tuṇḍīramanḍalē śēṣamūrtim rāmānujam bhajāē .. 16

तुलायां वेङ्कटाद्रौ तु पूर्वाषाढा समुद्भवम् ।

कुरुकेशं प्रचण्डांशं वन्दे श्रीशैलपूर्णजम् ॥ १७

tulāyam vēṅkaṭādrau tu pūrvāṣāḍha samudbhavam .

kurukēśam pracanḍāṁśam vandē śrīśailapūrṇajam .. 17

चैत्रे चित्रोद्भवं काञ्च्यां देवराजगुरोः सुतम् ।

सुभद्रांशं गुरुत्तंसं वात्स्यं वरदमाश्रये ॥ १८

caitrē citrōdbhavam kāñcyāṁ dēvarājagurōḥ sutam .

subhadrāṁśam gurūttamsam vātsyam varadamāśrayē .. 18

चैत्रार्द्रा संभवं काञ्च्यां सुप्रतिष्ठांशमद्भुतम् ।

वन्दे रामानुजार्यं निगमान्तगुरोः गुरुम् ॥ १९

caitrārdrā sambhavam kāñcyāṁ supratisthāṁśamadbhutam .

vandē rāmānujāryam nigamāntagurōḥ gurum .. 19

नभस्य मासि श्रोणायां अनन्तार्यगुरुद्भवम् ।

श्रीवेङ्कटेशघण्टांशं वेदान्तगुरुमाश्रये ॥ २०

Nabhasya māsi śrōṇāyāṁ anantāryagurūdbhavam .

śrīvēṅkaṭēśaghaṇṭāṁśam vēdāntagurumāśrayē .. 20

श्रवणे मासि रोहिण्यां जातं वेङ्कटदेशिकात् ।

विश्वामित्रान्वयाब्धीन्दुम् वरदार्यमहं भजे ॥ २१

śravaṇē māsi rōhiṇyāṃ jātaṃ vēṅkaṭadēśikāt .

viśvāmitrānvayāb dhīndum varadāryamaham bhajē .. 21

ब्रह्मतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रोक्तं दिव्यसूरिवरस्तुतिः ।

यः पठेत् प्रातः उत्थाय स भवेत् वैष्णवोत्तमः ॥ २२

brahmatantrasvatantrōktaṃ divyasūrivarastutiḥ .

yaḥ paṭhēt prātaḥ utthāya sa bhavēt vaiṣṇavōttamaḥ .. 22

आचार्यानुग्रहात् सद्यः सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ।

दृष्टे मनोरथान् प्राप्यत्वदृष्टे मोक्षमाप्नुयात् ॥ २३

ācāryānugrahāt sadyaḥ sarvapāpaiḥ pramucyatē ..

dṛṣṭē manōrathān prāpyatvadṛṣṭē mōkṣamāpnuyāt .. 23

इति ब्रह्मतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रयोगीन्द्रकृतं दिव्यसूरि स्त्रोत्रं संपूर्णम् ॥

iti brahmatantrasvatantrayōgīndrakṛtaṃ divyasūri strōtraṃ sampūrṇam .

कवितार्किकसिंहायकल्याणगुणशालिने ।

श्रीमते वैङ्कटेशाय वेदान्तगुरवे नमः ॥

kavitārkikasimhāyakalyāṇaguṇaśālīnē .

śrīmatē vaiṅkaṭēśāya vēdāntaguravē namaḥ ..

देशिकन् तिरुवडिगळे शरणम् ॥

dēśikan tiruvaḍigaḷē śaraṇam ..

आचार्यानस्मदीयान् श्रुतिमकुटगुरुं संयमीन्द्रं शठारिं सर्वान्  
दिव्यांश्चसूरीन् प्रथममपि गुरुं श्रीविशिष्टं प्रणम्य ।  
पूर्वाचार्यैरनेकैर्लिखितमपि पुराविस्तरं देशिकानां  
पङ्क्तेर्माहात्म्यमद्यप्रतिपदनयतस्सङ्ग्रहाल्लिख्यतेऽत्र ॥

ācāryānasmadīyān śrutimakuṭagurum saṁyamīndram śaṭhāriṁ sarvān  
divyāṁścasūrīn prathamamapi gurum śrīviśiṣṭam praṇamya .  
pūrvācāryairanēkairlikhitamapi purāvistaram dēśikānām  
pañktērmāhātmyamadyapratipadanayatassaṅgrahāllikhyatēatra

*“Having bowed to our Āchārya, and also to the entire  
Guru Parampara adorned by the Divya Suris such as  
Nigamānta Deśika, Yatirāja, Śatāri and others; and  
having bowed to the foremost Guru- the Lord who is  
characterised by His eternal inseparable association  
with Śree, we hereby delineate the divine glory of the  
Guru Parampara according to what has earlier been  
explained in great detail by the previous Āchāryas!”*



श्री

## *Śrī Brahmatantraswatantra Swāmine Namaha/*

श्रीमद्वेदान्तसिद्धान्तस्थापनानित्यदीक्षितम् ।

श्रीमन् नारायणं वन्दे भान्तं सूरिगुरुत्तमैः ॥ १

śrīmadvēdāntasiddhāntasthāpanānityadīkṣitam .

śrīman nārāyaṇam vandē bhāntam sūrigurūttamaiḥ .. 1

Śrīmad:	the blessed / the auspicious / the divine
Vēdānta:	the Vēdās along with the Upanishads
Siddhānta:	doctrine / system of philosophy
Sthāpana:	in the establishment of / preserving
Nitya:	eternal / constant
Deekshitam:	to be prepared / ready / one engaged in / to instruct
Śrīman Nārāyaṇam:	Nārāyaṇa inseparably accompanied by Śree
Vande:	I worship
Bhāntam:	the one who shines forth
Sūri:	the Nitya Sūris
Guru:	the Âchāryas or preceptors
Uttamaihi:	amidst the most elevated / principal / excellent

*"I worship Śrīman Nārāyaṇa, the one who shines forth amidst the Nitya Sūris and the most excellent preceptors, and the one who is eternally engaged in the establishment of the doctrine of Vēdānta!"*

### Notes:

#### Śrīmad Vēdānta Siddhānta:

Refers to the divine philosophy of Vēdānta or Upanishad; Rāmānuja refers to the Upanishad as "Asesha Jagaddhitaanushasana Sruti Nikara Shirasa"; meaning 'the crown of the multitude of the Vēdās, which lays down the precept for the good of the whole universe'. He also explains as follows "Evam

*Itihāsa Puraana Dharmashatropabrumhita Saanga Vêdā Vedyaha Parabrahma Bhutaha Nārāyanaha*"; "Lord Nārāyana, the Supreme Brahman, can be understood only from the Vêdās, with their auxiliary texts, as supported by the Itihāsās, Purānās, and Dharma Shāstras". The Vêdānta text carries the quintessential teaching of the Vêdās and is therefore the crest jewel among the sacred texts. The word Siddhānta refers to a 'doctrine'. It also refers to 'a received truth'. Vêdānta Siddhānta indicates the quintessential truth taught by the Vêdānta and this quintessential truth constitutes the 'Tattva'!

The Supreme Brahman Nārāyana can be realized and reached only through the understanding of this doctrine of Vêdānta. 'Vêdānta Siddhānta' therefore qualifies as the 'Hita' or the 'means' to reach the final goal!

The word Siddhānta also refers to 'a final end, a final aim or purpose'. The final established conclusion of the Vêdānta is that Śrīman Nārāyana is the Supreme Brahman. In this regard the term 'Vêdānta Siddhānta' refers to the Purushārtha or end goal – Lord Śrīman Nārāyana!

The word 'Vêdānta Siddhānta' therefore also implies Tattva, Hita and Purushārtha!

### **Sthāpana:**

To firmly establish; or to restore; i.e. restoration of the Śrīmad Vêdānta Siddhānta and thereby re-establish the Tattva, Hita, Purushārtha

### **Nitya Deekshitam:**

The Lord is eternally engaged in the restoration of the Vêdānta Siddhānta; the word Nitya denotes eternity and continuity of this sport of the Lord; from time immemorial!

The Svetasvatara Upanishad VI.18 declares the Supreme Person to be the preceptor even to Chaturmukha Brahma.

यो ब्रह्माणं विदधाति पूर्वं यो वै वेदांश्च प्रहिणोति तस्मै ।  
तं ह देवं आत्मबुद्धिप्रकाशं मुमुक्षुर् वै शरणमहं प्रपद्ये ॥

yō brahmāṇaṃ vidadhāti pūrvaṃ yō vai vēdāṃśca prahiṇōti tasmai .  
taṃ ha dēvaṃ ātmabuddhiprakāśaṃ mumukṣur vai śaraṇamaham prapadyē ..

*"He who creates Brahma in the very beginning,  
He who furnishes him with the Vēdās,  
unto that divine Lord who enlightens my 'self' and  
'intellect', being desirous of Moksha, I surrender!"*

The Lord has repeatedly protected the dharma of the Vēdānta. At the very beginning, He created Chaturmukha Brahma and instructed him in the Vēdās. He then incarnated as Hayavadana, killed Madhu and Kaitabha, and restored the lost Vēdās to Chaturmukha Brahma. He Himself enunciated the Pancharatra doctrine to re-iterate the teachings of the Vēdā. He assumed the Vibhava form of Lord Krishna to teach the Bhagavad Gita, in order to establish the Tattva, Hita and Purushārtha, and thereby convey the central message of Vēdānta. He also incarnated as Dattātreya, adorning the saffron robes, and bearing the Tridandam- triple staff, to protect the Vēdās from the twisted interpretations of heretics. He directs great sages such as Narada, Parāshara, Shuka and Sounaka to preserve the doctrine of the Upanishads. Through the agency of Vyāsa, the Lord Himself compiled great works such as Brahma Sutras. It is by His will that the Nitya Sūris descend to the mortal world as preceptors to uphold the instruction of the Vēdā. Lord Nārāyana is therefore constantly engaged in the protection of the Vēdā.

As the Lord Himself declares,

धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ।

dharmaśamsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yugē yugē

*"For firmly re-establishing Dharma, I take birth from Yuga to Yuga"*

-Bhagavad Gita 4, 8

The Lord incarnates in various forms, from time to time, to re-instate the Vedic Dharma. This Dharma is nothing but the various means of worshipping the Lord, so as to be able to reach Him. Dharma therefore constitutes His worship.

The word Deekshitam indicates preparedness or spontaneity. The Supreme Lord is ever prepared to uphold firmly the dharma of the Vêdās. The word Deekshitam also indicates one who has taken a 'deeksha' or vow. The 'deeksha' or 'vow' taken by the Supreme Lord is to protect the Vêdānta Siddhānta. This again indicates that He incessantly engaged in it.

Another subtle aspect has been taught here. According to the Shastrās, a 'deeksha' can be taken only by one who is married. The word Nitya Deekshitam therefore has been used to specifically indicate the fact that Lord Nārāyana is eternally associated with His consort Goddess Lakshmi, and the fact that the deeksha of protecting the Vêdānta Siddhānta is taken jointly by the Lord and His consort Śree. Due to their eternal inseparable association, the 'deeksha' is also observed eternally!

### Śrīman Nārāyanam:

Refers to Nārāyana inseparably associated with Lakshmi; together the divine couple qualifies as the foremost or Highest preceptor of the system of Vêdānta. Lord Nārāyana is qualified by His association with Goddess Lakshmi and She by association with Him – therefore they are eternally inseparable and are each referred to through their relationship to the other.

The Lord Himself declares the truth about the status of Lakshmi in the Pancharatra Agama.

तथा लक्ष्म्याः स्वरूपं च वक्ष्ये शृणु समाहितः ।

गुणतश्च स्वरूपेण व्याप्तिस्साधारणी मता ॥

tathā lakṣmyāḥ svarūpaṁ ca vakṣyē śṛṇu samāhitaḥ .

guṇataśca svarūpēṇa vyāpti sādharāṇī matā ..

*"Thus, hear from Me regarding the true nature of Goddess Lakshmi! Total pervasion of this universe by attributes and by essential nature is common to both of Us!"*

मया यथा जगत् व्याप्तं स्वरूपेण स्वभावतः ।

तया व्याप्तं इदं सर्वं नियन्त्री च तथेश्वरी ॥

mayā yathā jagat vyāptam svarūpēṇa svabhāvataḥ .

tayā vyāptam idaṁ sarvaṁ niyantrī ca tathēśvarī ..

*"Just as I pervade this universe by My own essential nature, so too all this is pervaded by Her. She too is the ruler and controller of all!"*

मया व्याप्ता तथा साऽपि तया व्याप्तोऽहमीश्वरः ।

मम तस्या च सेनेश वैलक्षण्यं इदं शृणु ॥

mayā vyāptā tathā sā api tayā vyāptōahamīśvaraḥ ..

mama tasyā ca sēnēśa vailakṣaṇyaṁ idaṁ śṛṇu .

*"Just as I pervade Her, She too has pervaded Me! Hear thus from me O Senesha, the special attributes characterizing Us!"*

मच्छेषभूतसर्वेषां ईश्वरी वल्लभा मम ।

तस्याश्च जगतश्चाहं ईश्वरो वेदविश्रुतः ॥

macchēṣabhūtasarvēṣāṁ īśvarī vallabhā mama .

tasyāśca jagataścāhaṁ īśvarō vēdaviśrutaḥ ..

*"Being My consort, She rules over everyone and is subservient to Me! The Vēdās describes Me as Her Lord and the Lord of the universe!"*

अस्या मम च शेषं हि विभूतिरुभयात्मिका ।

इति श्रुतिशिरस्सिद्धं मच्छास्त्रेष्वपि मानदः ॥

asyā mama ca śēṣaṁ hi vibhūtirubhayātmikā .

iti śrutiśirassiddham macchāśrtēṣvapi mānadaḥ ..

*"Thus, the two worlds (material and transcendental) are indeed subservient to both of Us! This joint Overlordship of the entire universe is established by the Vēdānta and My own Shāstra (Pancharatra)!"*

In the Lakshmi Tantra of the Pancharatra Āgama, Goddess Lakshmi Herself states

भिन्नाऽभिन्ना च वर्तेऽहं ज्योत्स्नेव हिमदीधितेः ।

तावावां तत्त्वमेकं तु द्विधा भूतौ व्यवस्थितौ ॥

bhinnābhinnā ca vartēhaṃ jyōtsnēva himadīdhitēḥ .  
tāvāvāṃ tattvamēkaṃ tu dvidhā bhūtau vyavasthitau ..

*"I am identical with, at the same time different  
from Him, like the moon and the moonlight. This  
essential nature of Ours is single, yet exists as dual!"*

15-10

And again, Sita Herself says in the Rāmāyana:

अनन्याराघवेनाहं भास्करेण प्रभा यथा ।

ananyārāghavēnāhaṃ bhāskarēṇa prabhā yathā

*"Just as radiance cannot be seperated from the sun,  
so too I cannot be separated from Rāghava!"*

Rāmāyana, Sundara Kānda, 21-15

So reiterates Rama:

अनन्याहि मया सीता भास्करेण प्रभा यथा

ananyāhi mayā sītā bhāskarēṇa prabhā yathā

*"Sita is inseparable from Me, just as radiance  
is non seperable from the sun!"*

Rāmāyana, Yuddha Kānda, 118-19

In the Vishnu Purana, Sage Parāshara further clarifies

नित्यैवैषा जगन्माता विष्णोः श्रीरनपायिनी ।

यथा सर्वगतो विष्णुस्तथैवेयं द्विजोत्तम ॥

nityaivaiṣā jaganmātā viṣṇoḥ śrīranapāyinī .

yathā sarvagatō viṣṇustathaivēyaṃ dvijōttama ..

*"Just as Vishnu pervades everywhere, Lakshmi, the mother of the entire universe, too is all-pervading, O best of Brahmins!"*

VP 1-8-17

देवत्वे देवदेहेयं मनुष्यत्वे च मानुषी ।

विष्णोर्देहानुरूपां वै करोत्येषाऽत्मनस्तनुम् ॥

dēvatvē dēvadēhēyaṃ manuṣyatvē ca mānuṣī .

viṣṇōrdēhānurūpāṃ vai karōtyēṣātmanastanum ..

*"If Vishnu assumes the form of a God, She too assumes a similar form; If He assumes a human form, She too becomes a human being! She makes Her divine body assume a form to remain in conformity with that of Vishnu's!"*

VP 1-9-145

Based on the authority of the scriptures, based on the teachings of great sages who have authored the Itihāsas and Purānas; based on the tenets of the Pancharatra doctrine; and based on the teachings of purvācharyas, it is an established fact that the ultimate principle ruling over the entire universe as its Sovereign Overlord is the divine couple Lakshmi-Nārāyana; integrally associated, ever inseparable and constituting one reality- the Para Tattva! Therefore, in the scriptures (such as Vêdā, Upanishads, etc), wherever the Lord is referred to, Lakshmi is referred to as well, even if not explicitly stated!

Goddess Lakshmi is therefore referred to as the 'Vishrama Sthaanam', i.e the 'resting place' or the 'end-point' for the entire lineage of preceptors.

गुरूणां विश्रमस्थानं ईशानां जगतोस्य च ।

महिषीं देवदेवस्य दिव्यनित्यानपायिनी ॥

gurūṇāṃ viśramasthānaṃ īśānāṃ jagatōsya ca .

mahiṣīṃ dēvadēvasya divyanityānapāyini ..

*"Lakshmi is the resting place for the entire lineage of preceptors and is the ruler of the Universe. She is the reigning consort of the Lord of all Gods, She is verily divine and eternally inseparable from Him!"*

-Prapanna Pārijātha of Vātsyā Varadaguru, 6-2

The above verse summarizes the divine qualities of Goddess Lakshmi

- 1) She is the end-point of the entire lineage of Gurus. She is the ultimate Guru along with Her consort Nārāyana!
- 2) She is the ruler of the entire universe, inclusive of the material worlds and the divine transcendental world!
- 3) She is the reigning consort of the God of Gods! She is His unique distinguishing characteristic! It is Her inseparable association with the Lord that is taken as conclusive evidence of His supremacy!
- 4) She is divine, blemishless, is the abode of limitless auspicious qualities, and is the befitting consort of the Lord!
- 5) She is eternally inseparable from Him! Together they exist as one entity, under all circumstances!

लक्ष्मीनारायणाख्यं तत् ततो ब्रह्म सनातनम् ।

lakṣminārāyaṇākhyam tata tathō brahma sanātanam .

*"Thus, the Supreme, eternal, primeval Brahman is called Lakshmi-Nārāyana!"*

**Sūris:**

Refers to the Nitya Sūris- Ananta, Garuda, Vishwaksena, and other such eternally liberated souls who attend to the service of Lord Nārāyana. The Lord is incessantly served by innumerable number of 'Sūris', whose nature, existence and activities are in complete accordance with His divine will and also in absolute subservience to Him.

**Guru:**

The word Guru here refers to the illustrious line of preceptors starting with the Âļvārs and going down to the blessed Âchāryas.

**Uttamaihi:**

Amidst the highest, the most elevated, the greatest; 'Uttama Guru' here refers to the Âļvārs and Âchāryas. It is to be remembered that the Nitya Sūris are the ones that descend to the mortal earth as Âļvārs and Âchāryas, in accordance with the divine will of Śrīman Nārāyana. So those Nitya Sūris who have descended as Âļvārs and Âchāryas are herein referred to as 'Uttama Gurus'.

These Nitya Sūris in their incarnation as Âļvārs and Âchāryas are also referred to as 'Divya-Sūris'. The descent of these Nitya Sūris is divine (unlike the birth of mortal individuals), and is only for the pure intent of establishing the dharma of Vēdānata. Therefore these preceptors are called Divya Sūris, and they are the ones referred to by the title of this work.

**Bhāntam:**

The word Bhāntam indicates 'splendrous effulgence'. Bhāntam Sūri Guru Uttamaihi- Lord Śrīman Nārāyana is hereby described as the One being effulgent amidst the Nitya Sūris and Uttama Gurus. In reality, the divine couple Śree and Nārāyana stand distinguished by their superiority to all other entities. The use of the word Bhāntam is actually denoting this aspect - Overlordship - of the Lord and His

consort. The root word 'Bhā' 'to shine' denotes 'eminence' of the Supreme Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa!

He is radiant amidst the Nitya Sūris because there are thousands of such 'eternally unborn perfect souls' who are constantly worshipping and serving Him. Their actions are in complete conformity to the wishes of the Lord. In fact, rendering incessant service at the feet of Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa is their sole interest. They lovingly remain completely subservient to Him! Being the object of their one pointed devotion, Śrīman Nārāyaṇa shines glorious amidst the Nitya Sūris!

He is also effulgent amidst the Uttama Gurus because He is verily the foremost preceptor or the principal preceptor.

He is also effulgent amidst the Uttama Gurus because He is verily the object of their praise. The Uttama Gurus, in their works, bring out the true nature of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa, declare His Sovereignty, His Lordship, His Divinity! Śrīman Nārāyaṇa is therefore the Supreme Lord who is illumined by the Uttama Gurus!

In His Supreme abode Vaikuntam also, He is served by the host of Nitya Sūris and the Uttama Gurus. Therefore, in this sense also, Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa is effulgent along with the entire host of Nitya Sūris and Uttama Gurus!

The Taniyans composed by Śrī Vêdānta Deśika on the foremost Âchārya Lord Nārāyaṇa along with Goddess Śree is as follows:

कमप्याद्यं गुरुं वन्दे कमलाग्रहमेधिनम् ।

प्रवक्ताच्छन्दसां वक्ता पञ्चरात्रस्य यः स्वयम् ॥

kamapyādyam gurum vandē kamalāgṛhamēdhinam .  
pravaktācchandasāṃ vaktā pañcarātrasya yaḥ svayam .

*"I bow to the foremost preceptor of transcendental greatness, the consort of Lakshmi, who is the promulgator of the Vêdās, and who Himself spoke the Pāncharātra!"*

सहधर्मचरीं शौरेः संमन्त्रितजगद्धिताम् ।

अनुग्रहमयीं वन्दे नित्यमज्ञातनिग्रहाम् ॥

sahadharmacarīm śaurēḥ sammantritajagaddhitām .

anugrahamayīm vandē nityamajñātanigrahām ..

*"I worship the one who is the companion of Showri in the conduct of Dharma, who confers with the Lord in matters relating to the welfare of the universe, who is replete with loving grace and who is eternally unaware of punishment"*

Again, the Lord is characterized by the term 'Kamalā grhamedhinam' - the consort of Lakshmi; while Goddess Lakshmi is characterized by the term 'saha dharmacarīm śaurer' - the companion of Showri in the conduct of Dharma. This shows that He is qualified by His association with Her and She by Him - therefore they are eternally inseparable and they are each referred to through their relationship with the other!

तुलायां श्रवणे जातं काञ्च्यां काञ्चनवारिजात् ।

द्वापरे पाञ्चजन्यांशं सरोयोगिनमाश्रये ॥ २

tulāyām śravaṇē jātaṁ kāñcyām kāñcana vārijāt .

dvāparē pañcājanyāṁśaṁ sarōyōginamāśrayē .. 2

Tulaayaam:	in the month of Tula
Sravane:	under the constellation of Shraavana
Jaatam:	born
Kaanchyaam:	at Kanchi
Kanchana:	golden
Varijaath:	in a lotus flower
Dvaapare:	in the Dvapara Yuga
Panchajanya	the conch Pāñchajanya
Amsam:	as an incarnation of
Saroyoginaam:	the one named Saroyogi
Aasraye:	I surrender unto

*"I surrender to the one named Saroyogi, who was born in the Dvapara Yuga, month of Tula, under the constellation of Shravana, as an incarnation of Panchajanya, in a golden lotus at Kāñchipuram."*

### Notes:

Poigai Âļvār, also called Saroyogi or Kāsāra Muni, was an incarnation of the divine conch Panchajanya. He was born at the holy kshetra of Kāñchipuram in a golden lotus growing in the Poigai Pushkarini, near the Yathoktakaari temple. The birth date of this Âļvār is 862962 or Siddharti Varsham of the Dvapara age; Aippisi month, Shravana Asterism; Shukla Paksha Ashtami. This date calculates to B.C. 4140. 'Poigai', 'Saras' or 'Kāsāra' mean 'tank' or 'pond', indicating the circumstances of his birth. Poigai Âļvār composed the Mudal-Tiruvandādi.

तुलाश्रविष्ठासंभूतं भूतं कल्लोलमालिनः ।  
तीरे फुल्लोत्पलात् मल्लपुर्या ईडे गदांशकम् ॥ ३

tulāśraviṣṭhasambhūtaṁ bhūtaṁ kallōlamālinah .  
tīre phullōtpalāt mallapuryāṁ īḍē gadāṁśakam .. 3

Tulā:	in the month of Tula
Sravishtā:	under the constellation of Sravishtā
Sambhutam:	born in
Bhūtam:	the one named Bhūtam
Kallola Mālinaha:	the ocean; kallola means waves, mālina means garland
Teere:	shores of
Pullotpalāt:	in a blooming flower
Mallāpuryaam:	at Mallāpuram
Iide:	I praise
Gadā:	to the mace (of Vishnu, called Kaumodaki)
Amsakam:	as an incarnation of

*"I praise the one named Bhūtam, who was born as an incarnation of the mace, in the month of Tula, under the constellation of Sravishtaa, in a blooming flower at Mallaapuram along the shores of the sea."*

#### Notes:

Bhūtam Āḷvār, also called as Bhūta Yogi, was born one day after the birth of Poigai. He was an incarnation of the Kaumodāki, the mace of Lord Vishnu. His birth was in a blooming 'Mādhavi flower' at Tirukkadalmallai in Mahabalipuram. He took birth under the Sravishta or Dhanishta Asterism; Shukla Paksha Navami, of the Aippisi month of the 862962 Siddharti Varsham of Dwapara age. This date calculates to B.C. 4140. 'Bhuta' means one who has acquired a state of existence by the highest knowledge, through the grace of the Lord ('Bhu Sattāyām' means 'to exist'). Bhūtam Āḷvār is the composer of Irandām-Tiruvandādi.

तुला शतभिषक् जातं मयूरपुरिकैरवात् ।  
महान्तं महदाख्यातं वन्दे श्रीनन्दकांशकम् ॥ ४

tulā śatabhiṣak jātaṁ mayūrapurikairavāt  
mahāntaṁ mahadākhyātaṁ vandē śrīnandakāṁśakam .. 4

Tulaa:	in the month of Tula
Shatabhishak:	under the constellation of Shatabhishak
Jaataṁ:	born
Mayurapuri:	at Mayurapura (town of peacocks)
Kairavaat:	in the red water lilly
Mahantam:	the great
Mahadaakyaantam:	the one known as 'Mahad', i.e. Pey Âḷvār
Vande:	I worship
Śree Nanadaka:	the sword Nandaka
Amsakam:	as an incarnation of

*"I worship the incarnation of of Śree Nandaka, the great one known as 'Mahad', who was born in the month of Tula, under the constellation of Shatabhishak, in a red water-Lilly at Mayurapura."*

#### Notes:

Pey Âḷvār, also called Bhrāntha Yogi, was born in a red water Lilly at Mayurapura, the present day Mayilapur (Mylapore) at Chennai. He was also called as Mahadāhvaya Muni, signifying his greatness as one who experienced the Lord. 'Mahad' means 'the great'. 'Pey' also signifies one who is intoxicated with adoration for the Supreme Lord. He was called 'Bhrāntha' because Pey Âḷvār was 'insanely' possessed by total devotion that he had for the Lord. He was born a day after the birth of Bhūtam Âḷvār, under the Asterism of Shatabhishak of the same Aippisi month of the 862962 Siddhanti Varsham of Dwapara age. This date calculates to B.C. 4140. The day was Shukla Paksha Dashami. He composed the Mūndrām-Tiruvandādi. He was an incarnation of the Nandaka, the sword of Lord Vishnu.

These three Âļvārs- Poigai, Bhūtam and Pey, are called the 'Mudal Âļvārs'. They were born on three successive days, one after the other, at three different locations. Lord Vishnu however ordained that the three divine saints meet. This eventually happened at the holy kshetra of Tirukkovilur, located in the present Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu. The circumstance of this convergence was a dark rainy night, when the three Âļvārs simultaneously sought cover from the thunder and heavy downpour under the very same shelter. Poigai arrived first and sought shelter at the residence of Mrugandu Maharishi. The sage offered him a shelter with room enough for one person to sleep. When Bhuta Yogi arrived, Poigai offered to sit so as to share the space with him. Soon Pey Âļvār arrived, and the space was so narrow that the three of them could only stand! The Lord, having witnessed this miracle, decided to join His three devotees under that very shelter which was barely enough to accommodate all of them. He did this to experience close contact with these devotees of His, and to inspire them to compose divine hymns. Having felt the presence of a fourth person crowding them at that very spot, in the pitch dark of the night, the three Âļvārs spoke as follows:

Poigai said,

வையம் தகளியா வார் கடலே நெய் ஆக

வெய்ய கதிரோன் விளக்காக \* செய்ய

சுடர் ஆழியான் அடிக்கே \* சூட்டினேன் சொல் மாலை

இடர் ஆழி நீங்குகவே என்று

vaiyam takaliyā vār kaṭalē ney āka

veyya katirōṇ viḷakkāka ceyya

cuṭar āzīyāṇ aṭikkē cūṭṭinēṇ col mālai

iṭar āzi nīṅkukavē enṇu

*“With the entire earth as the lamp, the ocean as the oil,  
the shining sun as the light from the wick,  
I have braided a garland of song dedicated  
to the feet of the Lord who wields the discus,  
so that there may be freedom from the ocean of misery!”*

Bhūtam then said,

அன்பே தகலியா ஆர்வமே நெய் ஆக  
இன்புருகு சிந்தை இடு திரியா \* நன்புருகி  
ஞானச் சுடர் விளக்கேற்றினேன்\* நாரணற்கு\*  
ஞானத் தமிழ் புரிந்த நான்

anpē takaliyā ārvamē ney āka  
inpuruku cintai iṭu tiriyā naṇpuruki  
ñāṇac cuṭar viḷakkērrinēn nāraṇarku  
ñāṇat tamiz purinta nān

*“With devotion as the lamp, yearning as the oil,  
the heart melting in His thoughts as the wick,  
I light the bright lamp of devotion to Nārāyaṇa  
in verses of the revealed Tamil language!”*

Pey then exclaimed,

திருக் கண்டேன்\* பொன் மேனி கண்டேன்\* திகழும்  
அருக்கன் அணி நிறமும் கண்டேன்\*செருக் கிளரும்  
பொன் ஆழி கண்டேன்\*புரி சங்கம் கைக் கண்டேன்\*  
என் ஆழி வண்ணன்பால் இன்று

tiruk kaṇṭēn poṇ meṇi kaṇṭēn tikazum  
arukkan aṇi niramum kaṇṭēn ceruk kiḷarum  
poṇ āzi kaṇṭēn puri caṅkam kaik kaṇṭēn  
eṇ āzi vaṇṇaṇpāl inru

*"Goddess Śree I behold on the chest of the ocean hued Lord,  
the golden splendor of His form I see!  
Their radiant effulgence blending I see,  
the glorious discus and the lovely  
conch in His beautiful hands I see!"*

Poigai had lit the lamp of knowledge of Brahman, called 'Para-bhakti'. With that knowledge, Bhūtam lit the lamp of devotion to Brahman, called 'Para-Jnāna'. With the help of the light of the knowledge of Para bhakti and love of Para-Jnāna, Pey lit the lamp of Parama bhakti; or direct vision of the Lord. Once these three lamps were thus lit in succession, a glowing effulgent blaze came to shine forth and revealed to the three Âḷvārs the fourth person hiding amongst them- the Supreme Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa. And Pey describes that blessed vision of the divine form of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa! Having had this blessed vision, the three Âḷvārs poured out the devotional hymns of Mudal Tiruvandādi, Irandām Tiruvandādi and Mūndrām Tiruvandādi respectively.

मखायां मकरे मासे चक्रांशं भार्गवोद्भवम् ।  
महीसारपुराधीशं भक्तिसारं अहं भजे ॥ ५

makhāyāṃ makarē māsē cakraṃśaṃ bhārgavōdbhavam .  
mahīsārapurādhīśaṃ bhaktisāraṃ ahaṃ bhajē .. 5

Makhayaam:	in the asterism of Magha
Makare Mase:	in the month of Makara
Chakra:	the discus Sudarshana, of Lord Vishnu
Amsam:	an incarnation of
Bhargavodhbavam:	born as the son of sage Bhargava
Mahisārapura:	Tiru Mahisāra Pura
Aadeesham:	the ruler
Bhaktisāram:	Bhaktisāra
Aham:	I
Bhaje:	worship

*“I worship Bhaktisāra, the revered one from Mahisaarapura, an incarnation of the discus, who was born as the son of Bhargava, in the month of Makara, under the constellation of Mūgha.”*

#### Notes:

Bhaktisāra yogi, also called Tiru Mazhisaippirān or Bhārgava Yogi, is an incarnation of the Sudarshana discus of Lord Vishnu. He was the son of Bhārgava and was born in the village of Mahisārapura, located near the present Poonamale in Chennai. He was named ‘Mazhisai Pirān’. He was born in the same year as the Mudal Âļvārs- 862962 Siddhārti Varsham of Dwapara age; in the month of Tai, under the Asterism of Māgha. The day was Krishna Paksha Prathama Tithi. This date calculates to B.C. 4140.

Bhaktisāra was born as the son of sage Bhārgava and his wife Kanakāngi. At the time of birth, Bhaktisāra was abandoned in the

forest near Mahisaarapura. He was then adopted by a childless hunter by the name of Tiruvālan. When Tiruvālan's wife, out of utmost affection, offered the child her breast milk, the couple noticed that the child did not show any desire for food. Hearing of this unique behavior, an aged shudra and his wife came to see the child. The pious old shudra couple, comprehending the divine nature of the child, offered him some pure milk. After the child had partaken the milk, the remainder was consumed by the shudra couple. Soon, a son was born to the couple and he was named Kanikrishna. Kanikrishna became a direct disciple of Tirumazhisaippirān.

By then, Tirumazhisaippirān had acquired knowledge in all branches of the scriptures and also in all other doctrines such as Sankhya, Vaisheshika, Nyāya, Sākyā, Patanjala and Kāpāla. Having a thorough knowledge in all branches of the scriptures he was a 'Sakala-Shāstra-Prachanda', i.e. 'one adept in all scriptures'. As a culmination of all that knowledge, the mind of Bhaktisāra finally turned towards Śrīman Nārāyana. Tirumazhisaippirān thus came to realize the supreme truth Śrīman Nārāyana!

So deep was his attachment to Lord Śrīman Nārāyana, that the great God Shiva once decided to test the love of the Âḷvār for the Supreme Being. Shiva appeared along with his consort and offered to bless Tirumazhisaippirān with any desired boon. Tirumazhisaippirān desired nothing from Rudra and chose merely to ask "May the thread follow this needle!" Having been thus ridiculed, the wrath of Shiva now overtook him. Shiva desired to annihilate Tirumazhisaippirān and opened his third eye. The great Âḷvār countered Shiva's anger by opening a third eye in his own right foot. The great God Shiva was troubled by this, and realized his mistake. Seeing this divine nature of Tirumazhisaippirān and his love for Bhagavān, Lord Shiva conferred upon him the title 'Bhaktisāra' or 'the nectar of devotion'!

At this point, the three Mudal Âļvārs came to Tiru Mazhisai to meet this noble soul. Out of affection for Tirumazhisaiṭṭirān, the Mudal Âļvārs spent a few days in his company contemplating on the supreme Lord. The Mudal Âļvārs then travelled towards Tiru-Alli-keni (sacred Lilly pond), the birth place of Pey Âļvār. Tirumazhisaiṭṭirān then went to Kānchipuram and spent many years serving the Lord Sonna-Vannam-Seyda Perumāl (the Lord who had obeyed the request of Chaturmukha Brahma)!

Having been blessed by the Mudal Âļvārs, Tirumazhisaiṭṭirān composed the Nānmukhan Tiruvandādi.

நான்முகனை\* நாராயனன் படைத்தான்\* நான்முகனும்  
தான் முகமாய்ச் \* சங்கரனைத் தான் படைத்தான்\*யான் முகமாய்  
அந்தாதி மேலிட்டு\* அறிவித்தேன் ஆழ் பொருளை\*  
சிந்தாமல் கொள்மின் நீர் தேர்ந்து  
nānmukanai nārāyaṇan paṭaittān nānmukanum  
tān mukamāyc caṅkaranait tān paṭaittān yān mukamāy  
antāti mēliṭṭu arivittēn āz porulai  
cintāmal kolmin nīr tērtu

*"Nārāyaṇa created the four-faced,  
Being the first of the created, that four-faced one created Shankara,  
Being the first, I have made this inner meaning known to all!  
Let this be known!"*

With the vision of the Lord made possible by the lamps of the three Mudal Âļvārs, Tirumazhisaiṭṭirān was able to then comprehend the causal aspect of the Supreme Brahman and put it into the Tamil word. The other composition of this Âļvār is Tiru-cchanda-viruttam.

Tirumazhisaiṭṭirān spent many years serving the Lord of Tiru-Vekka. During that time, Kanikrishna came to Kanchipuram and sought refuge as the disciple of Tirumazhisaiṭṭirān. He acquired great spiritual knowledge by the grace of his Guru.

On one occasion, Kanikrishna bestowed the gift of youth upon a pious old lady by composing a hymn. He did this to allow her to continue to perform devout service to the Lord. At this time, King Pallava Raya came to know of the greatness of Kanikrishna. He asked that the secret of youth be bestowed upon him by means of a song composed in his praise. Kanikrishna, inclined to sing only the praise of the Lord, refused to comply with the King's wish. He was therefore banished from the city of Tiru-Vekka.

On hearing this incident, his preceptor Tirumazhisaippirān decided that he would follow Kanikrishna and commanded the Lord of Tiru-Vekka to also follow along. Without a second thought, the great Lord of Tiur-Vekka rolled up his snake bed and followed Pirān. Witnessing this miracle, the people of Tiru-Vekka also followed suit and soon the land of Tiru-Vekka witnessed a great famine. Pallava Raya having understood his heinous sin now fell at the feet of Kanikrishna and requested that the entire retinue proceed back to Tiru Vekka. Once again, the Lord complied with the request of his devotee and returned to His abode at Tiru-Vekka. It is for this reason also that the Lord of Tiru-Vekka is called 'Yathokta-Kaari Perumāl' or 'Sonna-Vannam-Seyda Perumāl'; i.e 'the Lord who obeyed the dictates of His devotee'.

Tirumazhisaippirān himself refers to this incident in verse 36 of the Naanmukhan TiruvAndādi.

Śri Vêdānta Deśika also refers to this incident :

प्रत्यादिशन्ति भवसञ्चरणं प्रजानाम् ।

भक्तानु गन्तुरिह यस्य गतागतानि ॥

pratyādiśanti bhavaśaṅcaraṇaṁ prajānām .

bhaktānu ganturiha yasya gatāgatāni .

*"The Lord's departure and return according to his devotee's command puts an end to our wanderings in the cycle of existence!"*

- Vegāsethu Stotram 6

वैशाखे तु विशाखायां कुरुकापुरिकारिजम् ।  
पाण्ड्यदेशे कलेरआदौ शठारिं सैन्यपं भजे ॥ ६

vaiśākhē tu viśākhāyāṃ kurukāpurikārijam .  
pāṇḍyadēśē kalērādau śaṭhāriṃ sainyapaṃ bhajāē .. 6

Vaishākhe:	in the month of Vaishākha
Tu:	and
Vishakāyam:	the constellation of Vishāka
Kurukāpuri:	at Kurukāpura
Kārijam:	as the son of Kāri
Pāndyadese:	in the Kingdom of Pāndya
Kalerādou:	at the beginning of Kali
Śatāri:	the enemy of Sata, Nammālvār
Sainyapam:	as an incarnation of Senesha
Bhaje:	I worship

***"I worship Śatāri, the incarnation of Senesha, who was born as the son of Kāri, at Kurukāpuri, in the Pāndya kingdom, under the constellation of Vishākha, in the month of Vaishākha, at the beginning of Kali!"***

#### Notes:

Śatāri, is also called Nammālvār, Vakulābharana, Parānkusha, Satakopa, Kurukādhīpa and Māran. He was born at the beginning of the Kali age, 43 days into the first cyclic year of Pramāthi, in the month of Vaikhasi, under the Asterism of Vishākha; on a Poornima day. This calculates to B.C 3102. He was born as an incarnation of Senai Mudaliyar or Vishwaksena, the chief commander of the army of Vishnu.

His birth was at Kurukaapura, also called Śrinagari or Tirunagari, the current-day town of Ālvār Tirunagari. He was born as the son of Kāri and his wife Udayanangai, in a Sat-Shudra family of the Vellālar community. He was named Māran. He was also called as Kurukaippirān, the revered one from Kurukāpura.

After the birth of this child, his parents noticed that he would not open his eyes to see the external world. On the twelfth day after his birth, he was taken to the temple of the Lord of Tirunagari and the child then saw the divya-mangala-vigraha of the Lord as his first beheld object.

It is said that the wind called 'Sata' envelopes every person at the time of birth and brings in the quality of ignorance. By conquering this 'Sata Vaayu', Māran was never afflicted by any subjections of the physical body – there was no hunger, no pain, no need to take in food or to excrete. Ari stands for 'enemy', and therefore Māran was called 'Śatāri' or 'Satakopa' (Kopa means 'anger', i.e. against Sata Vayu).

In the Tiruvaimoḷi, Nammāḷvār refers to himself as "one whose chest is adorned with the fresh fragrant garland of Vakula flowers". Therefore he is called 'Valkulābharana'; i.e one who is decorated by the Vakula flowers.

In the 33<sup>rd</sup> verse of his Periya Tiruvandādi, Māran declares "By becoming the servants of the Lord, we have become verily His sacred sandals." In accordance with this, the feet of the Lord are placed in the form of an image in every temple, and are referred to as Śatāri.

By Lord Ranganātha of Śrīrangam, this Âḷvār was endearingly called "Nammāḷvār", i.e 'Our Âḷvār'! With his divine compositions, Māran won over all those faiths that were antagonistic to the Vedic word, and therefore he came to be called as 'Parāṅkusha'; or 'one who controlled the enemies'.

Even from the moment of his birth, Māran was absorbed in deep devotion to the Supreme Lord. His parents watched him absorbed in meditation, not wanting to talk or eat. He settled down in contemplation of the Lord under a tamarind tree and remained there for 16 years in silent meditation. The tamarind tree is an incarnation

of Ananta, the serpent bed of Vishnu, and is called 'Tiru-puli-Âḷvār'.

Śrī Vishwaksena descended to earth, at the command of the divine couple Śree and Nārāyana, to initiate Māran into the Vaishnava fold by performing the Pancha Samskāras. Miraculous indeed are the ways of Bhagavān, for by His will he had Śatāri, the incarnation of Vishwaksena, be initiated verily by Vishwaksena himself!

सेनेशस्वयमागत्य प्रीत्या श्रीनगरीं शुभां ।

शठकोपाय मुनये तन्त्रिणीमूलवासिने ।

तापादिपूर्वकं मन्त्रं द्वयं श्लोकादिकं क्रमात् ॥

sēnēśasvayamāgatya prītyā śrīnagarīm śubhām .

śaṭhakōpāya munayē tintriṇīmūlavāsinē ..

tāpādipūrvakaṃ mantraṃ dvayaṃ ślōkādikaṃ kramāt ..

*"Senesha himself, out of affection, arrived at the sacred city of Kurukāpuri! To Satakopa Muni who was seated at the base of the tamarind tree, Senesha bestowed the Tāpa, followed by the Tirumantra, Dvaya, Charama Śloka and others in that particular order!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Having been initiated with the Pancha Samskāras by Vishwaksena, Śatāri now was adorned with the marks of Shanka-Chakra and the Vakula flowers. His divine body emitted a bright effulgence!

It is important to note that Madhurakavi Âḷvār was born prior to Nammāḷvār. After Māran was initiated, there appeared a bright effulgence in the region of Kurukāpuri. Madhurakavi followed the direction of this effulgence and reached Kurukāpuri, to behold the divine Māran sitting under a great tamarind tree. The brilliance was seen to be radiating from Māran's body. Upon seeing him, Madhurakavi asked "If the soul is born in the inert matter of the womb, what does it eat and where does it rest?" Māran broke the

silence he had been maintaining from birth and replied tersely “That it eats, There it rests!”

In the answer of Māran, Madhurakavi found the quintessential truth of Vêdānta! From that point in time, Madhurakavi became his devout disciple.

The timing of the descent of Nammālvār onto the mortal earth is important to note. ‘Kaleradou’ refers to the onset of Kali. In the previous ages or Yugas, several sages did the noble work of propagating the Vêdānta doctrine. Vālmiki, Parāshara, Vyāsa, Shuka and other such noble sages compiled works to reveal the inner meaning of the scriptures. With the onset of the ‘dark age’ of Kali however, the traditional teachings of the Vêdānta were lost and had to be re-established. In order to accomplish this, Vishwaksena himself descended upon earth as Swāmi Nammālvār!

Nammālvār’s divine compositions are four in number—Tiruviruttam, Tiruvāsiriyam, Tiruvaimoļi, and Periya Tiruvandādi. Although the path of Sharanāgati or Prapatti was taught even prior to Nammālvār, it was he who re-established it on this earth.

In the Guruparampara, Vishwaksena, the consort of Sootravati, plays the role of an Āchārya linking the divine couple Śrīman Nārāyana to Swāmi Nammālvār. It is Vishwaksena who directly initiated Nammālvār into the quintessential secrets of the doctrine of Vêdānta and the Mantras and their meanings.

Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika therefore has composed the following laudatory verse on Vishwaksena who plays the role of an Āchārya:

वन्दे वैकुण्ठसेनान्यं देवं सूत्रवतीसखम् ।  
यद्वेत्रशिखरस्पन्दे विश्वमेतद् व्यवस्थितम् ॥

vandē vaikunṭhasēnānyam dēvam sūtravatī sakham .  
yadvētraśikharaśpandē viśvamētaḍ vyavasthitam .

*"I praise the commander-in-chief of Vaikunta,  
the God who is the consort of Sootravathi,  
the activity of the tip of whose cane sets  
the entire universe in orderliness."*

Other important verses on Nammālvār: the following verse  
composed by Yāmunāchārya-

मातापितायुवतयः तनया विभूतिः  
सर्वं यदेव नियमेन मदन्वयानां ।  
आद्यस्य नः कुलपतेः वकुळाभिरामं  
श्रीमत् तदङ्घ्रियुगळं प्रणमामि मूर्ध्ना ॥

mātāpitāyuvatayaḥ tanayā vibhūtiḥ  
sarvaṁ yadēva niyamēna madanvayānām  
ādyasya naḥ kulapatēḥ vakuḷābhirāmaṁ  
śrīmat tadaṅghriyugaḷaṁ praṇamāmi mūrdhnā ..

*"I reverentially bow my head to the feet of that Valkulābhirāma,  
who is the first God of our family and who is verily a mother,  
father, women, sons and wealth to every one born in my race!"*

Swāmi Vēdānta Deśika has composed the following laudatory verse  
on Nammālvār:

यस्य सारस्वतं स्त्रोतो वकुळामोदवासितम् ।  
श्रुतीनां विश्रमायालं शठारिं तमुपास्महे ॥

yasyasārasvataṁ strōtō vakuḷāmōdavāsitaṁ .  
śrutīnām viśramāyālaṁ śaṭhāriṁ tamupāsmahē ..

*"I worship that Śatāri, the flow of whose speech  
exudes the fragrance of vakula flowers and  
offers sufficient resting place for the Vēdās."*

चैत्रे चित्रा समुद्भूतं पाण्ड्यदेशे गणांशकम् ।

श्रीपराङ्कुशसद्भक्तं मधुरम् कविमाश्रये ॥ ७

caitrē citrā samudbhūtaṁ pāṇḍyadēśē gaṇāṁśakam .

śrīparāṅkuśasadbhaktaṁ madhuram kavimāśrayē .. 7

Chaitre:	in the month of Chaitra
Chitra:	under the constellation of Chittira
Samudbhutam:	born
Pāṇḍyadese:	in the country of the Pāṇdyas
Ganāmsakam:	an incarnation of Kumuda, the attendant of Lord Vishnu (Gana means attendant)
Śrī Prāṅkusha:	of Sage Parāṅkusha
Sadbhaktam:	devout disciple
Madhuram Kavim:	to Madhurakavi
Aasraye:	I surrender

***“I surrender to Madhurakavi, the devout disciple of Śrī Parāṅkusha , who was born in the month of Chaitra, under the constellation of Chitra, in the country of the Pāṇdyas, as an incarnation of Kumuda- the attendant of Vishnu!”***

### Notes:

The birth of Śrī Madhurakavi was in the Dwapara Yuga, Isvara year 863879, in month of Chaitra, and Asterism of Chitra; on Shukla Chaturdashi. This calculates to B.C. 3223. He took birth as the son of a Purva Shikha Brahmin, in the city of Tirukkolur. He was an incarnation of Kumudar, one of the attendants of Lord Vishnu.

Having studied the Vēdās, Shāstras and various angas of the Vēdā, he decided to spend the remainder of his life visiting the Divya Kshetras around the country. During his travels, when he was at Tiru Ayodhya, Madhurakavi saw a bright light glowing in the southern sky. Trying to investigate the source of that bright light, Madhurakavi travelled all the way to Tirunagari where he beheld Nammālvār sitting beneath the great tamarind tree. Comprehending

that Nammālvār was blessed with profound knowledge, Madhurakavi sought his refuge.

From Nammālvār, Madhurakavi learnt the four divine compositions of his preceptor. The essence of Rig Vêdā was found in the Tiruviruttam, the essence of Yajur Vêdā in Tiruvāsiriyam, the essence of Atharvana Vêdā in Periya Tiruvandādi and the essence of Sāma Vêdā in the Tiruvaimoļi. Through these four granthas called 'Prabanda Chatushtayam', Madhurakavi was also taught the Tattva (the Supreme Truth), Hita (the means to attain the final goal), Purushārtha (the final goal), the mantras and their inner meanings. By the grace of Nammālvār, Madhurakavi also had the anubhavam (direct vision) of Śri Vaikuntam where he saw the auspicious form of Śrīman Nārāyana, shining gloriously along with His consorts and all His entourage!

Out of the overflowing gratitude Madhurakavi had for his Âchārya, he composed the 'Kanninum Siruttāmbu', which sings the glory of Nammālvār in the Tamil verse. Unlike other Âlvārs, Madhurakavi has the unique distinction of being the only Âlvār to sing the praise of his Âchārya, and not directly the praise of Perumāl. He knew of no other lord than his preceptor, Nammālvār! Because of these sweet hymns composed by him, he became known as 'Madhura-Kavi' (the composer of sweet verses). At Tirunagari, Madhurakavi also installed the Archā Vighraha of Nammālvār and spent the rest of his life worshipping him and spreading the nectarine teachings of the Prabanda Chatushtayam.

कुम्भे पुनर्वसूभवं केरळे कोळपट्टणे ।  
कौस्तुभांशं धराधीशं कुलशेखरमाश्रये ॥ ८

kumbhē punarvasūbhavaṃ kēraḷē kōḷapaṭṭaṇē.  
kaustubhāṃśaṃ dharādhiśaṃ kulaśēkharamāśrayē .. 8

Kumbhe:	in the month of Kumbha
Punarvasu:	under the constellation of Punarvasu
Bhavam:	born
Kerale:	in the region of Kerala
Kola Pattane:	in the town of Kollam
Kaustubha:	the divine gem Kaustubha
Amsam:	an incarnation of
Dharadeesham:	the lord of the earth
Kulashekharam:	Śrī Kulashekhara
Aashraye:	I surrender

*"I surrender to the King Kulashekhara, the manifestation of Kausthuba, who was born in the month of Kumbha, under the constellation of Punarvasu, in the town of Kollam in Kerala!"*

#### Notes:

Śrī Kulashekar Āḷvār was an incarnation of the divine Kausthubha gem that adorns the broad, handsome chest of Lord Vishnu. He took birth in the Kali age, in the 28<sup>th</sup> cyclic year of Parābhava, in the month of Māsi, under the Asterism of Punarvasu, Shukla Paksha Dwādashi. This calculates to B.C. 3074.

He was born as a prince at Tiruvanjikkalam in the Kerala region. After studying the various scriptures, he ruled over Kerala as an able king, protecting the people of his land. This victorious king was deeply devoted to the Lord of Arangam. He constantly invited learned Śree Vaishnavās to his palace so that the congregation may read and enjoy together the essence of the Purānās and Itihāsās. He was especially devoted to Lord Rāma and enjoyed reading the Rāmāyana. On a certain occasion, while hearing the discourse on

Śrīmad Rāmāyana, king Kulashekara became so very passionately involved with the events in the life of his dear Lord that at one point (when Lord Rāma was confronted by Khara, Dooshana and 14000 Rakshasas under their command) he got up in haste, commanding his own army to march forward to lend support to Lord Rāma! The Śree Vaishnavās who had collected there tried in vain to hold the king back, until they finally convinced him by narrating a verse (Valmiki Rāmāyana III-30-39) which declared the already established victory of Rāma and His re-uniting with Sita!

His association with Śree Vaishnavās made the king more and more absorbed in devotion to the Lord. For this reason, the ministers of his kingdom decided to hatch a plot by which King Kulashekara could be cured of this 'illness' of devotion. They falsely accused the Śree Vaishnavās of stealing a precious ornament. Knowing very well that the Śree Vaishnava devotees could do no wrong, King Kulashekara challenged the accusations of the ministers. Thrusting his hand into a pot containing a venomous cobra and boldly declaring that he be bitten if the Śree Vaishnavās were guilty, King Kulashekara put his fate to test! True to his declaration and to the fact that the Śree Vaishnavās were indeed innocent, the cobra did not bite the King. The ministers and others who despised the innocent Śree Vaishnavās were thus put to shame. At this point, King Kulashekara decided to renounce his kingdom to spend the rest of his life in contemplation of the Lord.

He composed the Perumāl Tiruvoimozhi in Tamil verse. He has composed in Sanskrit also, having rendered the Mukundamāla in praise of Lord Krishna. He spent the rest of his life visiting the Divya Kshetras and serving his most dear Lord.

ज्येष्ठे स्वातीभवं विष्णुरथांशं धन्विनःपुरे ।

प्रपद्ये श्वशुरं विष्णोः विष्णुचित्तं पुरःशिखम् ॥ ९

jyēṣṭhē svātībhavaṃ viṣṇurathāṃśaṃ dhanvinaḥpurē .

prapadyē śvaśuraṃ viṣṇōḥ viṣṇucittaṃ puraḥśikham .. 9

Jyeshte:	in the month of Jyeshta
Svāthi:	under the constellation of Svāthi
Bhavam:	born
Vishnu ratha:	the chariot of Vishnu; i.e. Garuda
Amsam:	portion of
Dhanvinah Pure:	Śrīvilliputtur
Prapadye:	I seek refuge
Svashuram:	father-in-law
Vishnoho:	of Vishnu
Vishnuchittam:	Śri Vishnuchitta
Purashikam:	in the clan of Purvashikas

***"I surrender to the father-in-law of Vishnu, Śri Vishnuchitta, who was born at Śrīvilliputtur in the month of Jyeshta, under the constellation of Svāthi, in the clan of Purva Shikhas, as an incarnation of the charriot of Vishnu!"***

## Notes:

Vishnuchitta, also called Periyālvār, Bhattar Pirān or Bhatta-nātha, was an incarnation of Garuda, the chariot of Lord Vishnu. He was born in the Kali age, in the 47<sup>th</sup> cyclic year of Krodhana, in the month of Âni, in the Asterism of Svāthi, Shukla Paksha, Ekadasi. This calculates to B.C. 3055.

His birth was at Dhanvinahpura, or Śrīvilliputtur. He was born in a clan of Śree Vaishnava Brahmins called 'Purvashikhas', i.e those who wear a tuft of hair on the front of the crown of their heads. At a very young age, he was adept in the Yajur Vêdā, and other Vedic scriptures. He lived at Śrīvilliputtur performing the Kainkaryam of

offering garlands to Lord Vatapatra Shāyi. These garlands were made from flowers grown in his garden.

At that time, King Vallabha Devan was ruling the kingdom at Madurai. Once a Dharmika Brahmin advised him thus:

वर्षार्थमष्टौ प्रयतेत मासान् रात्र्यर्थमार्थं दिवसं यतेत ।  
वार्धक्यहेतोर् वयसा नवेन परत्र हेतोर् इह जन्मना च ॥

varṣārthamaṣṭau prayatēta māsān rātryarthamārthaṁ divasaṁ yatēta .  
vārdhakyahētōr vayasā navēna paratra hētōr iha janmanā ca ..

*"Perform your duty for eight months a year to be well prepared for the other four months; work during the day to rest at night; work during manhood to provide for old age; and so too, use this birth to attain moksha hereafter!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Seeing the truth contained in the advice, Vallabha Devan called upon his chief priest Shelva Nambi and asked him about the path to be taken to realize the Supreme Tattva. Shelva Nambi suggested that the king call for a gathering of scholars 'Vidwath Sadas' to debate upon the nature of the supreme truth. In order to investigate the true import of the Vêdānta, Vallabha Devan then organized a debate to be conducted at his palace, and invited all the great scholars of his kingdom. A 'Kizhi', 'fabric bag containing gold coins' was hung and was offered as the prize for the winner of the debate.

At that very time, Lord Vatapatra Shāyi appeared in the dream of Śrī Vishnu Chitta and commanded him to establish the supremacy of Lord Śrīman Nārāyana through the medium of this debate. Śrī Vishnu Chitta proceeded to Madurai, with the intention of complying with the wish of his dear Lord.

At the capital city of the kingdom of Vallabha Devan, Vishnu Chitta was well received and honored. Selva Nambi recognized this divine personality and knew that he was on a specific mission. By means of cogent arguments based on the relevant scriptural texts, the Smṛiti, the Itihāsa and the Purānās, Vishnu Chitta expounded the inner truths of the Vēdānta. He concluded by establishing that Śrīman Nārāyaṇa is the Ultimate reality, the goal and the refuge. At that point, the 'Kizhi' containing the prize fell down by its own accord in front of the Āḷvār, thereby signifying his victory! This victorious debate of Vishnu Chitta is called 'Paratattva Nirmaya'!

Overjoyed upon receiving this quintessential teaching of Vēdānta, Vallabha Devan honored Vishnu Chitta by seating him in a golden palanquin on a royal elephant and taking him in procession along the streets of Madurai. He bestowed upon the Āḷvār the title of 'Bhattar-Pirān', i.e 'the chief among Brahamanas'!

Surprised at the wondrous will of the Lord, Bhattar Pirān looked towards the sky. At that very moment he beheld Lord Nārāyaṇa along with Śrī, mounted on the great Garuda, served on all sides by His numerous attendants. Having had the divine vision of the Lord along with His consort in all glory, with divine auspicious attributes and with their paraphernalia, Śrī Periyāḷvār at once dismounted the palanquin. Using the bells that were adorning the elephant as musical instruments, he burst forth singing "Pallandu Pallandu"! Concerned at the prospect of the Lord's splendor attracting malevolent 'evil eyes', he hastened to wish the Lord millions of glory-filled years of life, forgetting that the Lord had neither a beginning nor an end, and that no 'evil-eyes' could ever have any effect on Him!

#### Additional Notes:

Dhanvinah means 'those who carry bow and arrows'; referring to the hunter chieftain by the name of Villi. Lord Vishnu appeared in the dream of Villi and directed him into a cave near a banyan tree.

In that cave, Villi found the deity of Lord Vatapatrasāyi along with riches. Villi used the riches to build a city and constructed a temple for Lord Vatapatrasāyi, therefore the name Śri Villiputtur for this city.

Why Vishnu Chitta is called the father-in-law of Vishnu is detailed in the next verse.

आषाढे पूर्व फल्गुण्यां तुलसीकाननोद्भवाम् ।  
पाण्ड्ये विश्वंभरां गोदां वन्दे श्रीरंगनायिकाम् ॥ १०

āṣāḍhē pūrva phalgunyām tulasīkānanōdbhavām .  
pāṇḍyē viśvambharām gōdām vandē śrīraṅganāyikām .. 10

Aashāde:	in the month of Aashāda
Poorvapalgunyaam:	under the constellation of Purvaphalguni
Tulasikaanana:	in a Tulasi grove
Udhhavam:	being born
Paandye:	in the country of Pāndya
Vishvambharām:	Bhu Devi
Godhām:	Godha
Vande:	I revere
Śrīranganayikam:	the consort of Śrī Ranganātha

*"I worship the consort of Ranganātha, Godha- the incarnation of Bhu Devi, who was born in the month of Aashāda, under the constellation of Purvaphalguni, in a tulasi grove, in the country of Pāndya!"*

#### Notes:

Godha, also called 'Āndāl' or 'Choodi Kodutha Nācchiyār', was an incarnation of the all-pervading Bhu Devi Herself, the consort of Śrī Ranganātha. She was born in the 98<sup>th</sup> cyclic Kali year of Nala, in the month of Ādi, under the Asterism of Purvaphalguni; on a Tuesday, Shukla Chaturti; at Śrī Villiputtur. This calculates to B.C. 3004. Just as King Janaka found Sita, so too Periyālvār found a baby girl in his Tulasi grove and named her Godhai, 'gift of mother earth'.

The term 'Viśvambharām' refers to Bhu Devi. 'Vishwam Bharati' means 'She supports the entire Universe'. Swāmi Vēdānta Deśika says in the Bhu Stuti:

विश्वंभरस्य दयितासि तदेक नामा ।

viśvambharasya dayitāsi tadēka nāmā .

*"Since You are the consort of the Lord who bears the Universe, You are also called Vishvambari!"*

विश्वंभरेति विपुलेति वसुन्धरेति ।  
viśvambharēti vipulēti vasundharēti .

*"You are known as Vishvambhara- the one who bears  
the entire universe, Vipulaa- the immesurable, and  
Vasundhara- the one with limitless wealth!"*

विश्वस्य मातरम् अकिञ्चनकामधेनुम् ।  
विश्वंभराम् अशरणः शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥  
viśvasya mātaram akiñcanakāmadhēnum .  
viśvambharām aśaraṇaḥ śaraṇam prapadyē ..

*"Being helpless, I surrender to the Mother of the Universe,  
the wish yielding treasure for the destitute, the one  
who bears the entire universe- Vishvambharām!"*

As Vishvambharām, Bhumi Devi bears the entire Universe. She is also 'Vishvasya Māta' because just like the Lord, She sustains the entire universe; and in this sense also She is Vishvambharām- all pervading / all sustaining.

Godha Devi is verily this Bhumi Pirātti Herself! She is the complete incarnation of Vishvambharā! Therefore Swāmi Vēdānta Deśika refers to Godha in the Godha Stuti as

साक्षात् क्षमां ।  
sākṣāt kṣamām .

'Sākshāt Kshamām', i.e. 'verily Bhumidevi Herself'! Such is the meaning of the term *Godhām Vishvambharām*!

Godha was brought up by Periyālvār and she helped him in assembling flower garlands for Lord Vatapatra Shāyi. Everyday, Godha would adorn Herself with the prepared garlands even prior to offering it to the Lord, and would gaze into the mirror imagining

herself to be the bride of Lord Ranganātha! Periyālvār, unaware of this, ended up offering to the Lord those garlands that Godha had adorned Herself with. On one occasion however, Periyālvār saw Godha performing this unacceptable act and forbade her from repeating it. Thinking that those garlands were unfit, Periyālvār refrained from offering them to the Lord.

That night, the Lord of Villi Puttur, Śrī Vatapatrasāyi appeared in the dream of Vishnu Chitta and commanded him to bring only those garlands that had been previously worn by Godha. These garlands were most desired by the Lord for they would have first adorned His beloved devotee, none other than His divine consort Herself! Godha therefore came to be called 'Choodi Kodutta Nācchiyār', literally 'the consort who offered the garlands that She Herself wore'. Because the Lord came under the sway of the pure adoration of Godha, She became called as Āndāl, or 'the one who won over'.

This incident only deepened the love Godha had for Her Lord. She heard from Her father Periyālvār, the glory of the Lord residing at various Divya Kshetras. Her mind became completely absorbed in the bewitching form of the Lord of Arangam. Just as the Gopis yearned for oneness with Krishna, Godha portrayed her longing for the Lord in the month of Mārghaḷi, in her divine composition 'Tiruppavai'. She also composed the divine Nācchiyār Tirumozhi, a part of which is the description of Her dream of a Vedic wedding with the Lord of Arangam. 'Godha' also means 'one who presented a garland of hymns'!

To fulfill Her wishes, the Lord of Arangam appeared once again in the dream of Vishnu Chitta and requested that he give his daughter in marriage to Him. Astonished by this dream, but comprehending the divinity in Godha, Śrī Vishnu Chitta proceeded to Arangam from Śrī Villiputtur. Godha, seated in a grandly decorated palanquin, was accompanied by many people who miraculously heard of this planned wedding in their dreams as well. Upon

reaching Arangam, Godha beheld Her beloved Lord and proceeded towards Him, only to merge completely within His Divya Mangala Vighraha.

The Lord, pleased with this act of Vishnu Chitta gave him the exalted position of His 'Shvashura', i.e father-in-law! In this sense, the word Godha also means 'one who was offered or given' to the Lord!

कोदण्डे ज्येष्ठनक्षत्रे मण्डङ्गुडिपुरोद्भवम् ।

चोळोर्व्यां वनमालांशं भक्ताङ्घ्रिरेणुमाश्रये ॥ ११

kōḍaṇḍē jyeṣṭhanakṣatrē maṇḍaṅguḍipurōdbhavam .

cōḷōrvyāṃ vanamālāṃśaṃ bhaktāṅghrīreṇumāśrayē .. 11

Kodande:	in the month of Kodanda, i.e Dhanur Masam
Jeshta Nakshatre:	under the constellation of Jyeshta
Mandangudipura:	in the town of Mandangudi
Udbhavam:	born
Cholorvyām:	in the region of the Cholas
Vanamāla:	the divine garland (called Vanamāla) worn by Vishnu
Amsam:	an incarnation of
Bhaktāngrireṇu:	Bhaktāngrireṇu
Aasraye:	I seek refuge

*“I surrender to Bhaktāngrireṇu, the incarnation of Vanamāla, who was born in the month of Kodanda, under the constellation of Jyeshta, in the town of Mandangudi of the Chola kingdom!”*

#### Notes:

Tondaradipodi Âḷvār, also called Vipranārāyana or Bhaktāngrireṇu, was an incarnation of Vanamāla, the divine garland worn by Lord Vishnu. He was born in the 289<sup>th</sup> Kali year of Prabhava; in the month of Mārghaḷi, under the Asterism of Jyeshta; Krishna Paksha Chaturdashi. This calculates to B.C. 2813. He was born in Tiru Mandangudi, as the son of a Purva Shikha Brahmin. He was named Vipranārāyana, and was taught by his father, the Yajur Vêdā, and other branches along with Vêdā Angas. He was steeped in adoration of the Lord of Tiru Arangam and therefore spent his life serving Lord Ranganātha there. He built a garden ‘Tiru Nandana Vana’ and offered garlands made from the flowers obtained therefrom. His

deep devotion made him dispassionate and indifferent to worldly matters, and this quality was admired by his followers.

On one occasion, according to divine will, a courtesan named Deva-devi happened to seek shelter under a shady tree in the Tiru Nandana Vana. She beheld the attractive countenance of Vipranārāyana and his captivating appearance as a Vaishnava devotee. He was clad in pure white garments, decked with the twelve Tiruman Śrichoornams and wore the Tulasi, Nalinaaksha maala. Noticing his detachment from the external world, Deva-devi in banter with her friends, took upon herself the challenge of sowing the seed of worldly desires in Vipranārāyana's pious mind. Dressed as a poor woman, she fell at his feet, promising to help him in his flower service to the Lord of Arangam. Vipranārāyana fell prey to his compassion and Deva-devi was allowed to work in his garden. On one rainy day, Vipranārāyana saw Deva-devi working in the garden. Noticing that she was completely drenched, he offered her shelter in his house. At that moment, he succumbed to the grip of passion and was overcome by sensual feelings for her. Thereafter, he became a slave to her beauty and spent time admiring her attractiveness. Having accomplished her mission of making Vipranārāyana a slave to her beauty, Deva-devi now expected Vipranārāyana to bring in wealth. Vipranārāyana on the other hand did not know the ways and means of earning and acquiring material wealth.

Seeing these events unfold, the supremely compassionate mother Śree Devi requested the Lord of Arangam to intervene, so as to help His devotee. Assuming the form of a messenger, the Lord of Arangam took a golden cup from the temple and gave it to Deva-devi, telling her that Vipranārāyana had sent this gift for her. Soon the mystery of the missing golden cup of the temple of Arangam reached the ears of the Chola king. Investigations into the matter led to the finding that the lady Deva-devi had in her possession the precious property of the temple. On being questioned, it was

understood that Vipranārāyana had bestowed this gift upon her. Vipranārāyana was imprisoned!

That supreme Lord of Arangam then appeared in the dream of the priest at the temple and revealed to him the truth about the divine nature of the Âḷvār. The priest narrated this to the king who at once released Vipranārāyana.

Being remorseful at this point, Vipranārāyana recalled the words of Kulashekara Âḷvār. He decided that the only way of absolving his sins would be to bathe his body with the dust from the feet of devotees of Lord Vishnu. He accepted the Śrīpāda Tirtha of the devotees of Ranga and considered himself blessed. The Lord of Arangam gave him the appellation 'Bhakta Anghri Renu' or 'Thodar Adippodi'; meaning the Âḷvār who was verily 'the dust of the feet of devotees'.

Tondaradipodi Âḷvār has composed two works in Tamil called Tirumālai and Tiruppalli Ezucchi.

कार्तिके रोहिणीजातं श्रीपाणं निचुळपुरे ।  
श्रीवत्सांशं गायकेन्द्रं मुनिवाहनमाश्रये ॥ १२

kārtikē rōhiṇījātaṃ śrīpāṇaṃ niculāpure .  
śrīvatsāṃśaṃ gāyakēndraṃ munivāhana māśrayē .. 12

Kārtike:	in the month of Kārthika
Rohini:	under the constellation of Rohini
Jātaṃ:	born
Śrī Pānam:	Tiruppān Āļvār, called as Śrī Pānar
Nichulāpure:	at Nichulāpura; lit- the city of Nichula trees (palm tree) .
Śrīvathsāmsam:	as an incarnation of the Śrīvathsa
Gāyakendram:	king among musicians
Munivāhanam:	in sage Munivāhana
Aasraye:	I seek refuge

***“I seek refuge in Śrī Pānar, also called Munivāhana,  
the king among musicians, who was an incarnation  
of the Śrīvatsa, born at Nichulāpura, in the month of  
Karthika, under the constellation of Rohini!”***

#### Notes:

Tiruppān Āļvār, also called Munivāhana or Yogivāhana, was born in the Kali year 343 Durmathi; in the month of Vrishchika, under the Asterism of Rohini; Krishna Paksha Dviteeya. This calculates to B.C. 2759. His birth was at Nichulāpura, the current day city of Urayiur. He was born as an incarnation of the Śrīvatsa mark that is found on Lord Vishnu’s magnificent chest.

He was found by a childless couple of the Pānar community. He is therefore also called as ‘Śrī Pānar’. The Pānar tribe was a community of musicians.

Tiruppān Āḷvār was fed with Sātvik food such as cow's milk, by his parents. He was taught the art of singing and he carried the musical instrument veena on his shoulder. Being brought up in such a manner, the young Tiruppān Āḷvār did not come under the sway of the material world. He constantly engaged in glorifying the Lord, often spending time along the banks of river Kāveri beholding the beautiful temple of Lord Ranganātha across. Owing to the social customs prevailing at that time, the Pānar tribe was considered an 'outcaste', or a Panchama tribe, i.e. the fifth class outside the four classes of society. Tiruppān Āḷvār was therefore unable to enter the temple of his most dear Lord Ranga.

On the request of Goddess Śrī, Lord Vishnu decided to intervene. He appeared in the dream of a devotee called Loka Sāranga Muni and ordered him to bring Tiruppān Āḷvār to the temple, carrying him on his shoulders! Sāranga Muni complied with the wish of Periya Perumāḷ, and carried Tiruppān Āḷvār on his shoulders into the great temple of Śrīrangam. Therefore this Āḷvār is called as 'Munivāhana' or 'Yogivāhana'; one who was carried by Sāranga Muni. Beholding in the sanctum the most attractive form of the Lord, Tiruppān Āḷvār rendered the sweet Tamil verses of the Amalanāḍipirān. And as he was doing so, his physical body became merged into the divine Archā Vighraha of Periya Perumāḷ Ranganātha!

कार्तिके कृत्तिकाजातं चतुष्कविशिखामणिम् ।  
षट्प्रबंधकृतं शाङ्गमूर्ति कलियमाश्रये ॥ १३

kārtikē kṛttikājātaṃ catuṣkaviśikhāmaṇim .  
ṣaṭprabandhakṛtaṃ śāṅgamūrtiṃ kaliyamāśrayē .. 13

Kārtike:	in the month of Kārthika
Krittika:	under the constellation of Krittika
Jātam:	born
Chatushkavi:	four types of poetry
Shikhmanim:	crest jewel / best among
Shatprabandha:	six compositions / works
Kritam:	the composer of
Shāṅga:	the Sāranga bow of Lord Vishnu
Murtim:	the embodiment of
Kaliyam:	Kaliyan
Aasraye:	I surrender to

***"I surrender to Kaliyan, the incarnation of Sāranga, the best among those who compose four-fold poetry, the one who composed six works, and who was born in the month of Karthika under the constellation of Krittika!"***

## Notes:

Kaliyan, also called Tirumangai Âḷvār or Parakāla, was born in the 398<sup>th</sup> cyclic Kali year of Nala; in the month of Kārtikai or Vrishchika, under the Asterism of Krittika; on a Poornima. The English equivalent of this date is B.C. 2704. He was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu's bow Sāranga. He was born as the son of a Shudra named Neelan, in the holy city of Tiru Vāli.

Kaliyan was trained by his father and became skilled in the art of wielding the bow and other weapons. He served the Chola king in military conquests along with four other accomplices who were known to have had magical powers- Nir Mel Nadapan who was

capable of walking on water; Nizalil Maraivān who was capable of hiding in a shadow; Tāl Ooduvān who was adept in breaking locks and Tolā Vazakkan who was skilled to win extempore debates. Kaliyan was made the chieftain of the small city of Tiru Vāli Naadu. Having won over opponents with much ease, he was called 'Parakāla', i.e. one superior to the enemies.

At that time in Tiru Vāli there lived a lady of divine descent, who was named Kumada Valli since she was found at a lotus-pond (Kumuda-Alli) by her foster parents. When Kaliyan saw her, he fell for her beauty and decided to marry her. Kumada Valli however refused to marry anyone but a Vaishnava who wears the symbols of Shanka-chakra and who regularly performed Tadeeyārādhana or service to other Vaishnavās!

In order to satisfy her requirements, Kaliyan sought refuge at the feet of the presiding deity of the temple at Tiru Naraiyur- Tiru Naraiyur Nambi. From Him, Kaliyan received on his shoulders the insignia of conch and discus, the Tirman Śrichoornams and initiation into the meaning of Mantras. Being thus initiated into the Vaishnava fold, Kaliyan married Kumada Valli. Thereafter, he served devout Vaishnavās by performing daily the Tadeeyārādhana. The revenues of the Chola kingdom, of which he was a vassal, were being used up by Kaliyan for this service.

Soon the Chola king came to know of the reason for Kaliyan's absence from the royal court. He commanded his army to capture Kaliyan, however this proved futile as Kaliyan was a master in warfare. Having been defeated twice, the king decided to hatch a plot. Extending his hand in friendship, he tricked Kaliyan and captured him. Kaliyan was to be held until his dues were paid.

As always, the Lord of infinite compassion, Devarāja Perumāl of Kanchi decided to intervene! He appeared in the dream of Kaliyan and suggested that he direct his men to the banks of the river Vegavati. Following these instructions, the soldiers dug deep along

the banks and found a huge amount of buried treasure. With this, dues were paid to the king and the balance was used in the performance of service to Vaishnavās. Kaliyan soon ran out of all resources to continue his noble deeds. He therefore resorted to robbery, wherein he would capture the wealth of non-righteous people and use the same for service of the righteous!

Noticing the predicament His devotee was in, the Lord of Arangam appeared along with his consort in the form of a newly married couple. Decked with glittering ornaments, this couple walked the path towards Kaliyan. Not knowing that the divine couple themselves had come his way in the guise of being unrighteous, Kaliyan threatened them with weapons and stripped them of all valuables. Having tied this heap of ornaments into a bundle, Kaliyan was unable to lift it. Suspecting the couple to be well versed in magic, Kaliyan commanded that they reveal the secret to him. The Lord of Gods, Periya Perumāl Himself, under the pretext of revealing a secret, uttered in the ear of Kaliyan the sacred eight syllabled mantra, its quintessential meaning and its inherent greatness. Having thus been initiated, Tirumangai Âḷvār was now steeped in devotion.

It was then that Tirumangai Âḷvār composed six works in Tamil verse. These were Periya Tirumozhi, Tirukkuruntāndakam, Tirunedundāndakam, Tiruvezhu Kootrirukkai, Siriya Tirumadal and Periya Tirumadal.

He became famous as Chatushkavi Shikhamani or Nālu-Kavi Perumāl, because he was adept in composing four types of poetry in Tamil verse; Asu- extempore verses on any subject, Madhura-sweet verses, Chitra- verses set in geometric pattern, and Vistāra-elaborate verses with usage of several different meters. He was once challenged by a Shaiva scholar named Sambandha Murti at a place called Seerakaazhi; but he was able to conquer his opponent with much ease and lived up to his title.

Following this, Tirumangai Âḷvār along with his wife Kumuda Valli went around the country visiting Divya Kshetras and singing the glory of the Lord. He installed the Archā of Nammāḷvār at Tirunagari. Having then returned to Tiru Arangam, he served Lord Namperumāl! Along with his four trusted ministers, he worked towards building a Mantapam and a great Gopuram for the Lord of Arangam.

While Tirumangai Âḷvār was serving the Lord at Śrīrangam, another important event occurred. During the Tiru Kārtikai Mahotsavam (great festival of the Kārtika month), while the Tirumanjanam (divine ablutions) were being performed for the Lord and His consort, the Divine Couple blessed Tirumangai Âḷvār and conferred upon the work Tiruvaimoḷi, a status equal to that of the Vêdās, upon the Âḷvār's request. The Divine Couple also expressed their desire to behold Nammāḷvār of Tirunagari during the recitation of the Vêdās along with Tiruvaimoḷi on the Shukla Ekadashi Tirunāl of the sacred Mārghaḷi month.

In accordance with the expressed wishes of the Lord and His consort, Tirumangai Âḷvār brought the Archā of Nammāḷvār from Tirunagari on this sacred day. He also built a great 'Parama Pada' gateway at Śrīrangam. Tirumangai Âḷvār then instituted the first ever recitation festival wherein the Vêdās were chanted along with the rendering of the Tamil Prabandhams of the Âḷvārs. He organized this festival to be conducted yearly during the month of Mārghaḷi over a period of ten days and named it 'Tiru Adhyayana Utsavam'.

Having accomplished ordained tasks, Tirumangai Âḷvār spent the rest of his life with his wife Kumuda Valli, meditating on the Lord at the sacred town of Tirukkurungudi.

### Additional notes on the Âļvārs:

The Âļvārs are twelve in number. Some authors praise ten, praising Āndāl and Madhurakavi separately. Others list ten, eulogizing Nammāļvār and Madhurakavi separately. Some others list eleven, praising Āndāl separately.

First, it is important to note that the praise of a Guru includes that of his disciple. Therefore praise of Nammāļvār includes that of his disciple Madhurakavi and praise of Periyāļvār includes that of his disciple Āndāl.

There are also other reasons for such varying classifications.

Madhurakavi Âļvār was unique in showing the path of Âchārya Bhakti. While all other Âļvārs praised the Supreme Lord, his compositions praised Nammāļvār alone. This indicates that the Lord can be attained only by seeking refuge in a qualified Âchārya. For the disciple, the Âchārya is verily the manifest God.

Nammāļvār is the only Âļvār who is mentioned in the Guruparampara of Śree Vaishnavās while tracing upwards from one's own preceptor all the way up to Śrīman Nārāyana. In fact, it is Nammāļvār who connects the preceptors of the higher world (Vaikuntam) to the lower world (the earth). Although not contemporaneous, he is the preceptor of our first Âchārya Nāthamuni. Having appeared to Nāthamuni who was in a trance of devout meditation, Nammāļvār himself taught the entire Dviya Prabandham including works of all the other Âļvārs. Therefore, he is the only one among the Âļvārs that features in the conventional preceptorial succession. It is this pre-eminent status that sets him apart from the other Âļvārs. However, as the shining central gem adorning the garland of preceptors, he represents all the Âļvārs in the Guruparampara.

Two factors separate Godha (or Āndāl) from the rest of the Âļvārs. One, She is verily the descent of Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu, in Her manifestation as Bhumi-Pirātti. Second, being the only female

among the Âļvārs, She assumes a special status. Godha Devi indeed became one with Her beloved Lord Ranganātha!

The Prabandha Sāra of Vêdānta Deśika sets aside all doubts pertaining to the classification of the Âļvārs. In this work of 18 stanzas, Vêdānta Deśika indicates the Âļvārs to be twelve in number; traces their chronology; records the names of their works and the actual number of verses composed by each of them.

The birth of the Âļvārs requires special mention. True to the verse of the Bhāgavatham (quoted earlier), the Âļvārs were born in the land adjacent to sacred rivers. In the land adjacent to river Tāmraparni were born Nammāļvār and Madhurakavi Âļvār. Along the banks of the river Kritamāla or Vaigai, near the present city of Madurai, were born Periyāļvār and Godai. The first four Âļvārs Poigai, Bhūtam, Pey and Tirumazishi were born in the land alongside the river Payasvini or Pālār. Tondaradipodi Âļvār, Tiruppan Âļvār and Tirumangai Âļvār took birth along the river Kāveri. Kulashekar Âļvār was born in the region of the Mahanadi or Periyar River which runs in an East to West direction.

## **The Divine Descent of the Âchāryas:**

Owing to the evil effects of the age of Kali and due to the long lapse of time, the knowledge of the doctrine of Vêdānta began to wane. The works of the Âjvārs, which taught the same tenets as that of Vêdānta in a simpler way, became lost to mankind! The ancient practices of appropriate worship, including the celebration of the Tiru Adhyayana Utsavam, became forgotten. The knowledge of the true nature of Lord Śrīman Nārāyana became oblivious to mankind. Numerous other tenets had started to spring up, and the practice 'Sanātana Dharma' or 'Primeval Everlasting Doctrine' seemed to be declining.

At this juncture the Supreme Lord Śrīman Nārāyana, who is eternally engaged in establishing the Vêdānta, intervened! Directing His close attendants to incarnate as Âchāryas, the Lord Himself ensured the continuity of the 'Guruparampara' in an incessant manner!

ज्येष्ठे अनूराधासंभूतं वीरनारायणे पुरे ।

गजवक्त्रांशमाचार्यं आद्यं नाथमुनिं भजे ॥ १४

jyēṣṭhē anūrādhāsambhūtaṁ vīranārāyaṇē purē .

gajavaktrāṁśamācāryaṁ ādyaṁ nāthamuniṁ bhajē .. 14

Jyeshte:	in the month of Jyeshta
Anurādha:	under the constellation of Anurādha
Sambhutam:	born
Viranārāyana Pure:	at Viranārāyana Pura
Gajavaktramsam:	as an incarnation of Gajavaktra
Āchāryam:	Āchārya
Ādyam:	the first
Nāthamunim:	Nāthamuni
Bhaje:	I praise

*"I praise the first Āchārya Nāthamuni, the incarnation of Gajavaktra, who was born at Viranārāyanapura, in the month Jyesta under the constellation of Anurādha!"*

### Notes:

Nāthamuni is considered to be the manifestation of Gajavaktra, second in line of Vishnu's commanders, headed by Vishwakṣena. It is said that Vishwakṣena leads an army of hundreds of thousands of Nitya Sūris who are capable of removing all obstacles. Gajavaktra, i.e. elephant headed, is one such member of Lord Vishnu's army.

यस्यद्विरदवक्त्राद्याः पारिषद्याः परश्शतम् ।

विघ्नं निघ्नन्ति सततं विष्वक्सेनं तमाश्रये ॥

yasyadviradavaktrādyāḥ pāriṣadyāḥ paraśśatam .

vighnaṁ nighnanti satataṁ viṣvakṣeṇaṁ tamāśrayē ..

*"I seek the protection of Vishwakṣena, whose army led by Dvirada Vaktra and hundreds of thousands of such others is capable of constantly quelling all obstacles!"*

Nāthamuni is an incarnation of this Dvirada Vaktra (elephant faced) attendant of Lord Vishnu. Note that 'Dvirada' means 'two-tusked',

and differentiates Gajavaktra from Ganapathi who is 'Ekadanta' (single tusked). Nāthamuni's birth was in Kali year 3685, the cyclic year of Shobakrit, month of Âni or Jyeshta, Shukla Paksha Trayodashi, under the Asterism of Anuradha. This calculates to C.E. 583. He was born as the son of a Vaishnava brahmin by the name of Isvara Muni of Shatamarshana Gotra, of the Sottai family, at Veeranārāyanapuram. He was named as 'Nāthar' and was taught the Vêdā Vêdānta. He was married to Aravindapāvai of Vankipuram and had a son Isvara Muni (named after the child's grandfather). The family served the Lord at Kāttu Mannār Koil of Veeranārāyanapuram.

Nāthamuni instructed his son Isvara Muni in Yoga and all other branches of the scriptures and married him off to a pious girl. Taking the young couple with them, Nāthamuni and his wife travelled to various Divya Kshetras around the country until they reached Govardhana Pura on the banks of river Yāmuna. Here, they bowed to Lord Yamunai-Turaivar, an Archā of Lord Krishna. The natural beauty and peaceful atmosphere of this place and the attractive temple of Yamunai-Turaivar made them stay here for a little longer. After some time, the Lord of Veeranārāyanapuram appeared in a dream to Nāthamuni and ordained him to return with his family to Kāttu Mannār Koil at Veeranārāyanapuram.

Nāthamuni is 'Âdyam Âchāryam', i.e. our first Âchārya because he forms the link between the twelve Âļvārs and the later Âchāryas. It so happened that while Nāthamuni was serving the feet of Lord Mannār at Veeranārāyanapuram, some Śree Vaishnavās arrived from Tirunagari and recited, at the sanctum, the sacred verses of 'Ârāvamudhe', a decad in the Tiruvaimoļi of Nammāļvār. Hearing these nectarine verses, Nāthamuni experienced the bliss of supreme devotion. He was anxious to learn the sacred composition in entirety. It was known from the chanting of the closing verse of that particular piece that the work comprising of a thousand verses was composed by one 'Kurukai Pirān'. Upon enquiry Nāthamuni learnt

that the group of travelling Śree Vaishnavās knew only this decad, which comprised a small portion of the much larger work. Taking the permission of Lord Mannār, Nāthamuni set forth to Tirunagari to find the remaining verses of the Tiruvaimoļi.

At Âļvār Tirunagari, he beheld the Archā Vīgrahas of the Âļvārs and came to know more about them. Prostrating at the feet of the Vaishnavās at Tirunagari, Nāthamuni was finally led to Parāṅkusha Dasa, a scholar who attained knowledge through the disciplinic succession of Madhurakavi Âļvār. Knowing the good intentions of Nāthamuni, Parāṅkusha Dasa advised him to chant the verses 'Kanninum Siruttāmbu' twelve thousand times. These verses had been handed over to Parāṅkusha Dasa through the Sat-Sampradāya of Madhurakavi Âļvār. He taught Nāthamuni this powerful verse so that he may directly obtain the grace of Nammāļvār.

Nāthamuni followed the advice and sat in meditation upon the feet of Nammāļvār, repeating the 'Kanninum Siruttāmbu' twelve thousand times!

Pleased with this act, the divine couple Śree and Nārāyana then ordained Nammāļvār to initiate Nāthamuni. Nammāļvār himself, along with Madhura Kavi, appeared in front of Nāthamuni and blessed him with the quintessential teachings of the Tirumantra with its meanings. Nammāļvār taught him the Vyāsa Sūtras with their meanings, the thousand verses of the Tiruvaimoļi and also the entire four-thousand inclusive of all the compositions of the twelve Âļvārs! In the Guruparampara therefore, Swāmi Nammāļvār is akin to a central-pendant representing the entire garland comprising the twelve Âļvārs.

Considering himself blessed, Nāthamuni remained at Âļvār Tirunagari serving the feet of the Âļvārs. Following the order of Lord Mannār, Nāthamuni then set these verses of the Âļvārs to rhythm and tune, thereby composing the divine music. Our first Âchārya, Śrīmad Nāthamuni forms a link between the Âļvārs and

the later Âchāryas. Nammālvār appeared to Nāthamuni and directly revealed to him the doctrinal secrets; therefore Nammālvār himself is the Âchārya of Nāthamuni.

Nammālvār is the Âchārya to Nāthamuni in three ways:

- 1) Nāthamuni heard Ârāvamudhe pasurams of Nammālvār and became initiated into it.
- 2) Nāthamuni was taught the Kanninum Siruttāmbu by Parānkusha Daasar. This Parankusha Daasar belonged to the disciplinic succession of Madhurakavi Âlvār, and the Parama Âchārya of that tradition was Nammālvār.
- 3) Nammālvār appeared to Nāthamuni in a vision and directly expounded to him the Divya Prabandhams.

Nāthamuni also performed another important feat. He heard the manner in which Tirumangai Âlvār had previously conducted the sacred recitation of the Vêdās along with the rendering of the Tamil Prabandhams of the Âlvārs during the month of Mārghaḷi, and how owing to the lapse of time the practice had become discontinued. Nāthamuni therefore organized the resumption of the 'Tiru Adhyayana Utsavam' and conducted the sacred festival over a longer period of twenty one days. The first thousand of the Tamil Prabandhams were recited over ten days beginning with the first day- 'Prathama' of the sacred Mārghaḷi month. The Tiruvaimoḷi was recited for the next ten days beginning with the eleventh day (Ekadashi). And the last thousand were recited on the twenty first day of the festival. Thus the entire Divya Prabandham was recited along with the Vêdās over a twenty one day period! Nāthamuni also reinstituted the practice of bringing the Archā of Nammālvār from Tirunagari for the sacred eleventh day of this festival. He further ensured that this recitation festival was conducted on an annual basis.

Śri Nāthamuni had eight principal disciples – Uyyakkondār, Kurugai-kkaval-appan, Nambi Karunakara Dasar, Erutiruvudaiyar,

Tirukkannamangai Āndān, Vānamādevi Āndān, Uruppattur Ācchan Pillai and Sogattur Ālvān.

Nāthamuni instructed his disciples Uyyakkondār and Kurugai-kkaval-appan to ensure that the knowledge of all Shāstras and branches be taught to his to-be-born grandson who he wished to name as Yamunai-Turaivar, in memory of the Lord of Govardhana Pura.

His works were – Nyaya Tatvam and Yoga Rahasyam. To these eight disciples, Nāthamuni imparted the sacred Divya Prabandhams, the meanings of the mantras, the essence of all scriptures and also the doctrines of Nyaya and Yoga.

Nāthamuni had two other important disciples- Kilgathālvān and Melgathālvān. These two disciples were considered to be verily the ‘trumpet’ and ‘conch’ to proclaim the truths of the Divya Prabandhams. Śrī Nāthamuni taught them the art of music, in order that they could then recite the sweet nectarine hymns of the Tamil Vêdā and spread the teaching. The forgotten nectarine hymns of the Ālvārs were therefore re-introduced in this world!

Śrī Yāmunāchārya has composed the following verses in praise of Śrī Nāthamuni:

नमोऽचिन्त्याद्भुताक्लिष्टज्ञानवैराग्यराशये ।

नाथाय मुनयेऽगाधभगवद्भक्तिसिन्धवे ॥

namōcintyādbhutākliṣṭajñānavairāgyarāśayē .

nāthāya munayēagādhahagavadbhaktisindhavē ..

*“Obeisance to Nāthamuni, the unfathomable ocean of devotion to the Supreme Lord; and an assemblage of unperturbed, incomprehensible, extraordinary knowledge and dispassion!”*

तस्मै नमो मधुजिदङ्घ्रिसरोजतत्त्व-

ज्ञानानुरागमहिमातिशयान्तसीम्ने ।

नाथाय नाथमुनयेऽत्र परत्र चापि  
नित्यं यदीयचरणौ शरणं मदीयम् ॥

tasmai namō madhujidaṅghrisarōjatattva  
jñānānurāgamahimātiśayāntasīmnē .  
nāthāya nāthamunayē'tra paratra cāpi  
nityaṃ yadiyacaraṇau śaraṇaṃ madīyam ..

*"I bow to that Nāthamuni whose feet are my eternal refuge in this world and thereafter, and who is an embodiment of pre-eminent greatness that constitutes the true knowledge and intense love for the lotus feet of the slayer of Madhu!"*

भूयो नमोऽपरिमिताच्युतभक्तितत्त्व-  
ज्ञानामृताब्धिपरिवाहशुभैर्वचोभिः ।  
लोकेऽवतीर्णपरमार्थसमग्रभक्ति-  
योगाय नाथमुनये यमिनां वराय ॥

bhūyō namōparimitācyutabhaktitattva  
jñānāmṛtābdhiparivāhaśubhairvacōbhiḥ .  
lōkēvatīrṇaparamārthasamagrabhakti  
yōgāya nāthamunayē yamināṃ varāya ..

*"Again, I bow to that Nāthamuni- the best among those who have subdued their senses, by whose auspicious overflowing utterances in the form of true knowledge and boundless nectarine ocean of devotion towards Achyutha, the highest most excellent Bhakti-Yoga has descended upon this earth!"*

अकृत्रिम त्वच्चरणारविन्दप्रेमप्रकर्षावधिमात्मवन्तम् ।  
पितामहं नाथमुनिं विलोक्य प्रसीद मद्वृत्तमचिन्तयित्वा ॥

akṛtrima tvaccaraṇāravindaprēmaprakarṣāvadhimātmavantaṁ  
pitāmahaṁ nāthamuniṁ vilōkya prasīda madvṛttamacintayitvā ..

*"Keeping in mind my grandfather Nāthamuni who is an embodiment of pre-eminent greatness that constitutes spontaneous love for Your lotus feet, do grant me Your grace regardless of my own conduct!"*

- Stotraratna 1,2,3, 65

Swāmi Vēdānta Deśika composed the following verse in praise of Śrī Nāthamuni:

नाथेन मुनिना तेन भवेयं नाथवानहम् ।

यस्य नैगमिकं तत्त्वं हस्तामलकतां गतम् ॥

nāthēna muninā tēna bhavēyaṁ nāthavānaham .

yasya naigamikam tattvaṁ hastāmalakatāṁ gatam .

*"By that lordly sage Nāthamuni, to whom the supreme secrets of the Vēdās had become as clear as placing an āmalaka fruit in one's palm, I became one having a master!"*

Before proceeding to the next verse of the Diva Sūri Stuti, it is important to highlight the Avatāra Rahasyas of two other Âchāryas in between Nāthamuni and Yāmunāchārya.

## Uyyakkondār:

Nāthamuni's foremost disciple was Uyyakkondār, also called as Pundarikāksha. Uyyakkondār was born in the Kali year 3928, cyclic year of Parābhava, Solar month of Chittirai, Asterism of Krittika; Shukla Paksha Prathama tithi, at the holy city of Thiruvellarai. This calculates to Thursday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, C.E. 826. He was an incarnation of the Nitya Sūri Jayathsena.

Pundarikāksha was steadfast in devotion to his Âchārya Nāthamuni. On one occasion, Nāthamuni asked Pundarikāksha to accompany the former's wife Aravindappāvai to her father's house. Pundarikāksha did accordingly and ensured that Aravindappāvai reached her destination safely. There, he was asked to partake a meal before returning. Pundarikāksha was however served the leftovers of the previous day and that too in the outer courtyard of the house by some miscreants. Pundarikāksha remained indifferent to this treatment, and having finished his meal returned to serve the feet of Nāthamuni. Even though he was treated in this peculiar manner, Pundarikāksha remained satisfied with the 'hospitality' shown to him. Nāthamuni, through his divine vision, understood the course of events that transpired at his in-laws house. When Nāthamuni asked Pundarikāksha about the inhospitable treatment shown towards him, the latter replied saying that it was a great honor to partake the remnant of food that has been offered to Bhāgavathas (or devotees of the Lord). Noting the divinity in him, Nāthamuni embraced Pundarikāksha and remarked 'Uyyakkondeer', meaning 'You have saved me!' By the Sātvik nature of Pundarikāksha, Nāthamuni was saved from embarrassment. Pundarikāksha was therefore known as Uyyakkondār or 'the one who saved'!

Uyyakkondār had six disciples – Manakkāl Nambi, Gomatam Tiruvinnagar Appan, Tiruvallikkeni Pān Perumāl Arayar, Settalur Sendalangerar, Śri Pundarika Dasar and Ulagapperumāl Nangai.

Nāthamuni had entrusted Uyyakkondār with the responsibility of instructing Yamunai-Turaivar into the doctrinal tenets.

Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika composed the following verse in praise of Śrī Uyyakkondār:

नमस्याम्यरविन्दाक्षं नाथ भावे व्यवस्थितम् ।

शुद्धसत्त्वमयं शौरैरवतारमिवापरम् ॥

namasyāmyaravindākṣaṁ nāthabhāvē vyavasthitam .

śuddhasattvamayaṁ śaurēravatāramivāparam ..

*"I bow to Śrī Pundarikāksha who has his mind firmly situated in Nāthamuni, who is full of pure sattva and verily seems like another incarnation of Sauri"*

### Manakkāl Nambi:

He was the foremost disciple of Uyyakkondār. His birth was at Manakkāl, and he was named Rāmamishra. He was an incarnation of Kumudar, one of the attendants of Lord Vishnu. His birth was in the year Kali 3933, the cyclic year of Virodhi, in the solar month of Māsi, under the Asterism of Makha or Māgha, Shukla Chaturdashi. This calculates to Sunday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, C.E. 831.

Manakkāl Nambi's extraordinary devotion to his Guru needs special mention. On one occasion, Nambi was accompanying the two very young daughters of his preceptor Pundarikāksha. There arose a situation when they encountered a puddle of slush on their way back home. Rāmamishra lay himself down in the wet mud and asked the two children of his preceptor to cross the puddle by stepping over his back. Since the dust of the feet of the Guru's daughters came in contact with his body, he became called 'Manal Kaal Nambi'!

Manakkāl Nambi's disciples were five in number – Ālavandār, Deivattukkarasu Nambi, Gomatam Tiruvinnagar Appan,

Siruppulloor Avudaiya Pillai and Acchi. He played an important role in bringing Yāmunāchārya back into the spiritual fold. He also passed on to Yāmuna the teachings of Nāthamuni through Pundarikāksha; and therefore satisfied the wish of Nāthamuni.

Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika composed the following verse in praise of Śri Rāmamishra:

अनुज्झितक्षमायोगं अपुण्यजनबाधकम् ।

अस्पृष्टमदरागं तं रामं तुर्यमुपास्महे ॥

anujñitakṣamāyōgaṁ apuṇyajanabādhakam .

asprṣṭamadarāgaṁ taṁ rāmaṁ turyamupāsmahē ..

*"I revere the fourth Rāma, who never forsakes the practice of forbearance, who is incapable of tormenting even the wicked, and who is untouched by drunkenness or desire."*

आषाढे च उत्तराषाढसंभूतं तत्र वै पुरे ।  
सिंहासनांशं विख्यातं श्री यामुन मुनिं भजे ॥ १५

āṣāḍhē ca uttarāṣāḍhasambhūtaṁ tatra vai purē .  
siṁhāsanāṁśaṁ vikhyātaṁ śrī yāmuna munim bhajē .. 15\*

Aashāde:	in the month of Aashāda
Cha:	and
Uttarāshāda:	the constellation Uttarāshāda
Sambhutam:	born
Tatra:	there
Vaipure:	in that very place (Veeranārāyanapuram)
Simhāsanāmsam:	an incarnation of the throne of Lord Vishnu
Vikhyātam:	well known / revered
Śrī Yāmunamuni:	Śrī Yāmunāchārya
Bhaje:	I worship

*“I worship the incarnation of the throne of Lord Vishnu, that sage Yāmuna, who was born at Veeranārāyanapura, in the month of Āshāda, under the constellation of Uttarāshāda!”*

#### Notes:

Yāmunāchārya was born in the Kali year of 4018, cyclic year Dhātu, in the month of Ādi, under the Asterism of Uttarāshāda, on a Poornima day; at Veeranārāyanapuram, the same birth place as his grandfather Nāthamuni. The English calendar equivalent of this date is Wednesday, July 17, 916 C.E. According to the instructions of Nāthamuni, the child was named by his father Isvaramuni as ‘Yamunai-Turaivar’; in adoration of Lord Krishna of Govardhana Pura on the banks of Yāmuna at Brindāvan. Yāmunāchārya is considered to be the manifestation of the throne of Lord Vishnu.

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\*There exists a slight variation in the reading of this sloka. Some sources mention ‘Simhānanāmsam’, referring to the Nitya Suri Simhānanā.

Nāthamuni was alive at the time of the birth of his grandson Yāmuna, however he was locked in a meditative trance. Nāthamuni had earlier instructed his disciple Kurugai-kkaval-appan to ensure that Isvaramuni and Uyyakkondār would eventually impart the quintessential doctrinal secrets to his grandson Yamunai-Turaivar. Uyyakkondār however entrusted this responsibility to his disciple Manakkāl Nambi.

Isvaramuni became the first preceptor of Yāmuna, initiating him with the Brahmopadeshām. At that time, Manakkāl Nambi blessed the young Yāmuna with teachings of the scriptures, the mantras, their meanings and also initiated him into the pancha Samskāras. Yāmuna then continued his studies in the angas of the Vêdā under the direction of a preceptor called Maha Bhāshya Bhatta.

In those days, in the court of the kingdom of Chola, there lived a scholar named Ākki Ālvān. This scholar, having been so far undefeated in debate, had become pompous with pride. He demanded that every scholar in the kingdom of Chola pay him an honorary fee. When the messengers of the royal court arrived at the house of Maha Bhāshya Bhatta, they were received by the young Yamunai-Turaivar. Noting the strange reason for their arrival, Yamunai-Turaivar tore the royal order and sent the messenger back to the court with the following reply,

न वयं कवयस्तु केवलं न वयं तन्त्रपारगाः ।

अपि तु प्रतिवादिवारणप्रकटाटोपविपाटनक्षमाः ॥

na vayaṁ kavayastu kēvalaṁ na vayaṁ tantrapāragāḥ .

api tu prativādivāraṇaprakaṭāṭōpavipāṭanakṣamāḥ ..

*"We are not mere poets, nor are we experts in the Tantra alone! Let it be evident that we are indeed capable of destroying the puffed up pride of all opponents!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Hearing this reply of Yamunai-Turaivar, Ākki Ālvān was furious. He sent the messengers back to bring this arrogant boy at once to the royal court. Yamunai-Turaivar refused to come unless he was taken with royal honors. The Chola king, having heard these demands, was now extremely curious to see who this young boy was. Upon the request of his queen, he sent forth a royal assembly to receive and bring the young scholar to the court with royal honors.

Yamunai-Turaivar walked into the royal court with a countenance that was glowing with confidence. Beholding the attractive countenance of this young boy who walked into the royal court, queen Tiruvarangattammai was impressed and hoped that this young boy would quell the pride of Ākki Ālvān. It so happened that the Chola king and his wife had earlier been involved in a debate regarding the supremacy of Lord Vishnu. The Queen, having been unable to convince him, took a vow that someday she would bring him into the Vaishnava fold! Seeing Yamunai-Turaivar, she hoped that the person who would help fulfill her vow had now arrived.

Yamunai-Turaivar then recited the following verse:

आशैलाद्रिकन्याचरणकिसलयन्यासधन्योपकंठात्  
 आरक्षोनीत सीतामुखकमलमुल्लासहेतोश्चसेतोः ।  
 आचप्राच्यप्रतीच्यक्षितिधरयुगळादर्कचन्द्रावतंसात्  
 मीमांसाशास्त्रयुग्मश्रममृदितमनामृग्यतां मादृशोन्यः ॥

āsailādrīkanyācaranakisalayanyāsadhanyōpakaṇṭhāth  
 ārakṣōnīta sītāmukhakamalamullāsahētōścasētōḥ  
 ācaprācyapratīcyakṣitidharayugaḷādarkacandrāvataṃsāt  
 mīmāṃsāśāstrayugmaśramamṛditamanāmṛgyatām mādṛśōnyah

*"Find if you can, another like me, who is adept in the dual (Purva and Uttara) Mimāṃsa Shāstra, in the entire stretch of land starting from the Himalayas- which is tread by the daughter of the mountains (Uma), all the way to the bridge of Rama- the delight for the lotus countenance of Sita, and from an East to West direction bound by the mountains whose tall crests are adorned by the sun and moon!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Having been challenged, Ākki Ālvān retorted saying that he could disprove what Yamunai-Turaivar deemed correct and prove what Yamunai-Turaivar deemed incorrect! At once, Yamunai-Turaivar stated three things:

*"Rajayam Sarvaboumaha", 'This King is the universal emperor!'*  
*"Raja Patniiyam Pativrtta", 'The Queen is a chaste wife!'*  
*"Twanmaata Na Vandhyaa", 'Your mother is not a barren woman!'*

Once these three statements were made, Ākki Ālvān realized the predicament he was put in. These statements were simply irrefutable! This was followed by a debate over various scriptural tenets, and in this too Ākki Ālvān was defeated. The members of the royal court now started praising the wisdom of the young boy. Delighted with this, the queen Tiruvarangattammai addressed the boy saying 'Ennai Ālavandhiro', meaning 'You here to rule over'. From then on Yamunai-Turaivar became renowned as 'Ālavandār'. The King gave him half his kingdom and Ālavandār ruled happily for a long time, living in company of his wife. Ālavandār had four sons- Sottai Nambi, Daivatthukkarasu Nambi, Pillaiyarasu Nambi and Tiruvaranga Perumāl.

During this time, Manakkāl Nambi, the disciple of Uyyakkondār, was watching the rise of Yāmuna to fame. He noted that Yāmuna was starting to stray from the path his grandfather had wished him to take. By means of a plan to befriend the king, Manakkāl Nambi became a cook in the royal kitchen of Ālavandār. For the enjoyment

of the King, he prepared and served a special dish called 'Thuthuvalai Kari Amudu'. The king relished this dish and this became the medium for Manakkāl Nambi to attract the attention of the King.

In fact, the King came to know of Nambi only after the latter stopped serving him the special dish. The King called for a meeting with him and offered Nambi anything he desired in anticipation that the latter would continue to serve him as a cook. Nambi however mentioned that rather than seeking any wish, he wanted to offer to the king a great treasure 'Mahānidhi' that was left behind by his grandfather Nāthamuni!

Having thus befriended the king, Manakkāl Nambi slowly instilled in his mind the teachings of the 18 chapters of the Bhagavad Gita over eighteen days. He taught him the essence of the Charama Śloka and the doctrine of Prapatti. With this instruction, the mind of Yāmuna turned Godward. Taking him to Arangam, Manakkāl Nambi then showed him the supreme treasure that Nāthamuni had left behind- the priceless Periya Perumāl Śri Ranganātha! This incident was enough for Yāmuna to realize the truth and renounce the material world. Through Manakkāl Nambi, he learnt the teachings of his grandfather Nāthamuni and eventually took up the fourth order of life donning the saffron robes. He now became Yāmunāchārya!

The four sons of Âlavandār also sought refuge at the feet of Manakkāl Nambi and imbibed the traditional precepts from him.

Yāmunāchāryas works are eight in number – Āgama Prāmānyam; Purusha Niraya; the three siddhis – Ātma Siddhi, Ishwara Siddhi, and Samvit Siddhi; Śri Gitaartha Sangraha; Chatush-Shloki and the Stotra Ratna.

Yāmunāchārya's principal disciples were sixteen – Periya Nambi, Tirukkottiyur Nambi, Tirumālai Āndān, Âlavandār Ālvān, Tirumalai Nambi, Tirukkacchi Nambi (or Kanchipurna), Isāndan,

Deivavari Andan, Siriyāndan, Tirumohoor Appan, Tirumohoor Ninar, Deivapperumāl, Tirumangai Aliyar, Pillai Tirumalirunjolai Dasar, Maraneri Nambi and Ālkondi.

Of these fifteen disciples, five prominent ones were responsible for carrying forward the teachings of Yāmunāchārya to Rāmānuja.

### **Tiruvarangapperumāl Arayar:**

He was also called Śrī Rangantha Perumāl Gāyaka, Vararanga Gāyaka, Alavandār Āḷvār or Rangēsha. He is considered to be an incarnation of the Nitya Sūri Shankukarna. He was born at Śrīrangam in the Kali year 4059, cyclic year by the name of Pingala, in the Solar month of Vaikhasi, under the Asterism of Jyēṣṭha, Krishna Paksha Prathama tithi. The English calendar equivalent of this date is Sunday, May 17, 957 C.E. At the feet of Tiruvarangapperumāl Arayar, Rāmānuja learnt the meaning of ‘Kanninum Siruttāmbu’, the verses of the Tiruvaimoḷi, and the stotras of Yāmunāchārya- Chatus Śloki and Stotra Ratna.

### **Periya Tirumalai Nambi:**

Tirumalai Nambi was the maternal uncle of Rāmānuja. He was also called Śrīsailapurna and belonged to the Sottai family of the Shatamarshana Gotra. He was born at Tirumala in the Kali year 4075, the cyclic year of Śrīmukha, in the Solar month of Purattāsi, under the Asterism of Anurādhā, on a Shukla Paksha Panchami day. The English calendar equivalent of this date is Thursday, September 4, 973 C.E. He is considered as an incarnation of the Nitya Sūri Sumukhar. Tirumalai Nambi was the one who named his nephew Rāmānuja. It was from him that Rāmānuja studied the Sharanāgati Shāstra- Rāmāyana, at Tirumala. Tirumalai Nambi had two sons- the elder son was named Tirumalai Nambi as well. Thus the father came to be known as Periya Tirumalai Nambi while the son came to be known as Pillai Tirumalai Nambi. The younger son of Tirumalai Nambi was named Pillān.

### **Tirukkottiyur Nambi:**

Also called as Ghoshtipurna. He was born at Tirukkottiyur in the Kali year of 4089, cyclic year of Sarvajith, in the Solar month of Vaikhasi, under the Asterism of Rohini, on Shukla Paksha Prathama. The English calendar equivalent of this date is Sunday, May 1, 987 C.E. He is considered as an Amsa of the Nitya Sūri Pundarika. Rāmānuja had to visit Tirukkottiyur Nambi eighteen times, before the preceptor agreed to reveal to him the nectarine meanings of the Ashtakshari Mantra and the Charama Śloka.

### **Periya Nambi:**

One of the most eminent among the disciples of Yāmuna was Periya Nambi, also called Mahapurna. He was born at Śrirangam in the Kali year 4099 of Hevilambi, in the Solar month of Mārghaḷi, under the Asterism of Jyeshta, falling on a Krishna Paksha Chaturdashi tithi. The English calendar equivalent of this date is Wednesday, December 1, 997 C.E. Periya Nambi is also considered as an incarnation of one of the Nitya Sūris- Kumuda. Mahapurna was the one who bestowed Rāmānuja with the Panchasamskāra and gave him the mantras at Madhurāntakam. From Mahapurna, Rāmānuja also learnt the nectarine secrets of the Vēdā and Vēdānta, the Vyasa Sutras and three thousand Divya Prabandhams (since he learnt the 1000 verse of the Tiruvaimoḷi from Śri Rangesha).

Periya Nambi's foremost disciples were six in number – Śri Rāmānuja, Malaikuniya Nindrār, Arya Śri Satakopa Dasar, Aniarangattamudanar, Tiruvaaikulamudaiyan Bhattar, and Tirukkacchi Nambi (or Kanchipurna).

### **Tirumālai Āndān:**

Tirumālai Āndān is also called Mālādhara. He is considered to be an incarnation of the Vanamāla garland worn by Lord Vishnu. The appellations 'Tirumālai' and 'Mālādhara' refer to this aspect. He

was born at Azhagar Tirumalai, near Madurai, in the Kali year 4090, cyclic year of Sarvajith, in the Solar month of Māsi, under the Asterism of Makha, on a Poornima. The English calendar equivalent of this date is Sunday, February 5, 988 C.E. At the feet of Tirumalai Āndān, Rāmānuja learnt the inner sense of Tiruvaimoḷi.

In this manner, these five Âchāryas headed by Periya Nambi, connect Rāmānuja with his Prāchārya Yāmuna! Rāmānuja was therefore also called ‘Panchāchārya Pravanar’.

### **Yāmunāchārya as the Prāchārya of Rāmānuja**

When Yāmunāchārya heard of the greatness of young Rāmānuja and the fact that Lord Perarulālan of Kanchi had Himself saved him from the dangers of the thick forests, Yāmuna at once realized that Rāmānuja was no ordinary soul. At once he proceeded to Perumāl Koil from Śrīrangam only to behold Rāmānuja!

It may be mentioned here that even Nammāḷvār knew of the future descent of Rāmānuja as ‘Bhavishyad Âchārya’. He had been blessed with this vision and with an Archā Vighraha of this future preceptor. In the Âchārya-Sishya Parampara through Nammāḷvār, Madhurakavi Âḷvār and then Nāthamuni, the quintessential secret of the vision of ‘Bhavishyad Âchārya’ and his sacred ‘Tirumeni’ (or Archā Vighraha) had been handed down. Yāmuna knew of this from his grandfather and preceptor Nāthamuni. Yāmuna had also seen the Archā of Bhavishyad Âchārya at Âḷvār Tirunagari.

When he beheld Rāmānuja walking amidst the disciples of Yādavaprakāsha, Yāmuna was attracted by his lustrous countenance from a distance and thereby recognized the young boy’s divine brilliance! Knowing at once that Rāmānuja was the one that Nammāḷvār had seen previously in his vision, he remarked to his disciples “Â Mudāḷvān Ivan”, “He is the chief of all!” The

disciples of Yāmuna understood that Rāmānuja was to be the future Âchārya of their Sampradāyam.

Thinking that meeting Rāmānuja in person would only distract him from his ‘purvapaksha’ (prima facie views’) studies, Yāmunāchārya blessed him from a distance within the core of his heart. He prayed to Lord Varadarāja, begging Him to send Rāmānuja into his fold so that the ancient doctrine of Vêdānta is endowed with a befitting future leader. He recited the following prayer in praise of Lord Varada, mentally longing for Rāmānuja to become his own disciple!

यस्य प्रसाद कलया बधिरश्ृणोति ।  
 फङ्गुः प्रधावति जवेन च वक्ति मूखः ॥  
 अन्धः प्रपश्यति सुतं लभते च वन्ध्या ।  
 तं देवमेव वरदं शरणं गतोस्मि ॥  
 yasya prasādakalayā badhiraśṛṇōti .  
 phaṅguḥ pradhāvati javēna ca vakti mūkhaḥ .  
 andhaḥ prapaśyati sutam labhatē ca vandhyā  
 tam dēvamēva varadam śaraṇam gatōsmi ..

*“By a mere fraction of whose abounding grace a deaf one can indeed hear, a lame one can begin to run, a dumb one can become eloquent, a blind one sees with clarity and a barren woman can beget a child, at the feet of that Lord Varada, I seek surrender!”*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

A few years later, Yāmunāchārya unfortunately became ill at Śrīrangam and realized that time had come for him to depart from the mortal world. He was deeply saddened by the fact that he was unable to meet Rāmānuja to directly hand over the responsibility of interpreting the Brahma Sutras of Vyāsa according to its true sense. Yāmunāchārya had often revealed the three main wishes to his

disciples, folding his three fingers everytime he indicated them. He now reminded his disciples of his three unfulfilled wishes

- 1) The rendering of a detailed interpretation of the Vyāsā's Vēdānta Sūtras according to its true sense!
- 2) The bestowal of the name of 'Parāshara', the author of Vishnu Purana to a worthy individual!
- 3) The rendering of a detailed gloss on the Tiruvaimoḷi and the bestowal of the name of 'Nammāḷvār' upon a worthy individual in recognition of the revered āḷvār!

An ailing Yāmunāchārya had earlier sent his foremost disciple Periya Nambi to bring Rāmānuja from Kanchipuram. Unfortunately, before Periya Nambi could return along with Rāmānuja to Śrīrangam, Yāmunāchārya had ascended to Parama Padam! The disciples of Yāmuna, having performed his last rites, brought his divine body to a place called 'Thirukkaramban Thurai' on the banks of the river Kāveri. It was here that Periya Nambi and Rāmānuja saw the divine body of Yāmuna and came to know of the unfortunate events, sending them into a state of extreme distress.

It was Rāmānuja who then noticed three folded fingers when he beheld the divine body of Yāmuna! On enquiry, the disciples gathered there were reminded about the wishes of Yāmunāchārya, and they recounted the same to Rāmānuja. Rāmānuja immediately took vows to fullfill the three wishes. With the restoration of the three folded fingers of to its former state, the Prāchārya Yāmuna had directly communicated and acknowledged his desires to his disciple Rāmānuja!

It should also be pointed out that Rāmānuja's father had obtained initiation from Periya Tirumalai Nambi who belonged to the lineage of Nāthamuni, and also happened to be the maternal uncle of Rāmānuja. In this respect also Yāmuna becomes the Prāchārya of Rāmānuja.

Rāmānuja has composed the following verses on his Prāchārya Yāmuna:

यत्पदाम्भोरुहध्यानविध्वस्ताशेषकल्मषः ।

वस्तुतामुपयातोऽहं यामुनेयं नमामि तम् ॥

yatpadāmbhōruhadhyānavidhvastāśēṣakalmaṣaḥ .

vastutāṃ upayātōhaṃ yāmunēyaṃ namāmi taṃ ..

*"I bow to that Yāmuna, by meditation on whose lotus feet I have my blemishes destroyed in entirety and by whose grace I have verily attained a state of existence!"*

यामुनार्यसुधाम्भोधिं अवगाह्य यथामति ।

आदाय भक्तियोगाख्यं रत्नं सन्दर्शयाम्यहम् ॥

yāmunāryasudhāmbhōdhiṃ avagāhya yathāmati .

ādāya bhaktiyōgākhyam ratnaṃ sandarśayāmyaham ..

*"Plunging deep down into the depths of the ocean of Yāmunāchārya's nectarine words, I shall bring out the ornament called Bhakti Yoga and describe it to the best of my abilities!"*

Swāmi Vēdānta Deśika composed the following verse in praise of Śri Yāmunāchārya:

विगाहे यामुनं तीर्थं साधु बृन्दावने स्थितम् ।

निरस्तजिह्वागस्पर्शं यत्र कृष्णः कृतादरः ॥

vigāhē yāmunam tīrtham sādhu bṛndāvanē sthitam .

nirastajihmagasparśē yatra kṛṣṇaḥ kṛtādarah ..

*"I dive deep into the venerable Âchārya Yāmuna, who protects the congregation of ascetics by dispelling contact with the people who pursue evil ways, and with regard to whom Lord Krishna showed great fondness!"*

Of the five foremost disciples of Yāmunāchārya, Mahapurna assumes an important role for three reasons. The Lord of Hastigiri, Devarāja Perumāḷ Himself, through Tirukkacchi Nambi (or Kanchipurna), suggested that Rāmānuja seek Mahapurna as the Âchārya. Secondly, Yāmunāchārya also chose Mahapurna to personally go to Kānchipuram and bring Rāmānuja into his fold. Third, Mahapurna was the one who bestowed Rāmānuja with the Panchasamskāra and gave him the mantras at Madhurantakam. He is therefore Rāmānuja's direct Âchārya.

Śrī Vēdānta Deśika has composed the following verse in praise of Mahapurna or Śrī Periya Nambi:

दयानिघ्नं यतीन्द्रस्य देशिकं पूर्णमाश्रये ।  
येन विश्वसृजो विष्णोः अपूर्यत मनोरथः ॥

dayānighnam yatīndrasya dēśikaṃ pūrṇamāśrayē .  
yēna viśvasrjō viṣṇōḥ apūryata manōrathaḥ ..

*"I seek refuge of Mahapurna, the Âchārya of Yatirāja, who was overcome by mercy and through whom the desire of Vishnu, the creator of the universe, became fulfilled!"*

चैत्रार्द्रा संभवं विष्णोः दर्शनस्थापनोत्सुकम् ।

तुण्डीरमण्डले शेषमूर्तिं रामानुजं भजे ॥ १६

caitrārdrā sambhavaṃ viṣṇōḥ darśanasthāpanōtsukam .

tuṇḍīraṃaṇḍalē śēṣamūrtiṃ rāmānujaṃ bhajāē .. 16

Chaitra:	in the month of Chaitra
Ardra:	under the constellation of Ardra
Sambhavam:	born
Vishnor-darshana:	the doctrine of Vishnu
Sthāpana:	to establish firmly / to preserve / to protect / to strengthen
Uthsukam:	one who is zealously active / eager
Tundeeramandale:	at Tundeera mandala
Seshamurtim:	the embodiment of Sesha, or Ananta
Rāmānujam:	Rāmānuja
Bhaje:	I worship

*"I worship Rāmānuja, the embodiment of Sesha, who showed great fervor in firmly establishing the doctrine of Vishnu, who was born in Tundeeramandala, in the month of Chaitra under the constellation of Ardra!"*

#### Notes:

Âchārya Rāmānuja is also called Lakshmana Guru, Lakshmana Muni, Lakshmanāchārya, Yatirāja, Yatindra, Yatisha, Yatishekhara, Udayavar, Śrī Bhāshyakārar, Ilaya Perumāl, or Emberumānār!

Rāmānuja was an incarnation of Âdishesha, the serpent bed of Lord Vishnu. Therefore the term 'Seshamurti' has been used. The names Lakshmana Guru, Lakshmanāchārya also indicate that Lakshmana who was an incarnation of Sesha descended once again in the age of Kali as Rāmānuja.

The birth of Rāmānuja has been detailed by his disciple Śrī Vatuka Nambi as follows:

ततो जगन्मङ्गलपिङ्गलाब्दे चैत्राख्य शुक्लच्छदपञ्चमीके ।  
 आर्द्राभिधर्क्षेण युते च वारे बृहस्पतेस्सन्मृगराजलग्ने ॥  
 वेदान्तसिद्धान्तसमर्थनाय बाह्यान्तरभ्रान्तमतापनुत्त्यै ।  
 शेषांशकः केशवयज्वदेव्यां तेजोनिधिः कश्चिदिहाविरासीत् ॥

tatō jaganmaṅgalapiṅgalābdē caitrākhyā śuklacchadapañcamīkē .  
 ādrābhīdharkṣēṇa yutē ca vārē bṛhaspatēssanmṛgarājalagnē ..  
 vēdāntasiddhāntasamarthanāya bāhyāntarabhrāntamatāpanuttyai .  
 śēṣāṁśakah kēśavayajvadēvyāṁ tējōnidhiḥ kaścīdihāvirāsīt ..

*"Then, in the Pingalā year, auspicious for the entire world, on a Shukla Panchami of the Chaitrā month, in conjunction with the asterism of Ardrā, falling on a Thursday, in the propitious lagna of Simha, was born the incarnation of Ādishesha, a receptacle of divine brilliance, as the son of the wife of Keshavasomayājīn, in order to establish the doctrine of Vēdānta and to abolish the fallacious doctrines both external and internal to the Vēdānta!"*

-Yatirāja Vaibhavam, 6-7

He was born in the Kali year 4119, the cyclic year of Pingala, in the month of Chittirai or Chaitra, under the Asterism of Ardra or Tiru Ādirai; on Shukla Panchami which fell on a Thursday. This date can be calculated to be Thursday, 4 April, 1017 C.E.

His birth was at Tundeeramandala, in the city of Bhutapuri, the present day city of Śriperumbudur. Tundeeramandala refers to the part of Tondai Nadu (Tamil Nadu) north of river Kāveri, with Kānchipuram as its capital city. In this region is the town called Bhutapuri, named so because it was constructed and inhabited by Bhutās or 'devotees of Lord Vishnu'. In this holy town was born Rāmānuja, near the temple of Ādi Keshava Perumāḷ. He was born to a Somayaji Brahmin named Śri Asuri Keshavāchārya and his

wife Bhumidevi or Kantimati, who was the sister of Periya Tirumalai Nambi.

It was Tirumala Nambi who named his nephew as 'Rāmānuja'. When Rāmānuja donned the saffron robes to enter the fourth order of life, Lord Varadarāja of Kanchi initiated him and gave him the title 'Yatirāja'. At Śrīrangam, Periya Perumāl Ranganātha gave him the title 'Udayavar', which literally means 'one who rules over', referring to the fact that Rāmānuja was given the two kingdoms to rule over- Nitya Vibhuti 'the permanent abode of Vaikuntam' and Leela Vibhuti 'the worlds manifested in the sport of creation'- the two together constituting the whole universe!

During his travels, Rāmānuja visited Goddess Saraswathi at the Sharada Pita in Kashmir. Immensely pleased with his flawless exposition of the Vêdānta Sūtras, Goddess Saraswathi called his Brahma Sūtra Bhāshya as 'Śrī Bhāshya' and blessed the commentary. She also blessed him with an Archā of Lord Lakshmi Hayagreeva in recognition of his deeds in protecting the sacred Vêdānta doctrine. Rāmānuja therefore became known as 'Bhāshyakāra' or 'Śrī Bhāshyakāra'. His preceptor Tirukkottiyur Nambi bestowed upon him the title of 'Emberumānār' and called the doctrine 'Emberumānār Darshanam'.

The Avatāra Rahasya of Rāmānuja has been explained clearly by Śrī Vêdānta Deśika in his work Yatirāja Saptati. It has also been declared in the 33<sup>rd</sup> verse of Rāmānuja Nootrandadi, composed by Tiru Arangathu Amudanar. The Pradhāna amsa (main portion) of Rāmānuja's incarnation is Âdisesha. However, the truth being that Lord Vishnu's five divine weapons, a portion of Vishwakṣena, a major portion of Âdisesha, and a portion of Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Himself incarnated together as Âchārya Rāmānuja!

The term 'Vishnor-darshana' has been used to indicate certain important facts. First, this is the same doctrine (darshana) that Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Himself has taught. He is the first Âchārya of our Guruparampara. This is the same doctrine referred to as Śrīmad

Vêdānta Siddhānta in the first verse of this work. Śrīman Nārāyaṇa who is eternally engaged in protecting this doctrine of Vêdānta now protected the same doctrine in the age of Kali through Rāmānuja. It may also be recalled that Lord Varadarāja of Kanchi gave six instructions to Rāmānuja through Kanchipurna. These instructions became the basis for Rāmānuja's doctrine and therefore usage of the term 'Vishnor-darshana' is befitting.

Sthāpana means to 'firmly establish'. With the advent of Kali, and the passage of time, the doctrine of Vêdānta had been defiled by fallacious and improper interpretations. In order to set this right, and to bring out the true import of Vêdānta, Rāmānuja took birth in the age of Kali. His ordained task was to re-establish and protect the eternal doctrine of Vêdānta.

Vishnor-darshana can also mean 'understanding of the Supreme Brahman Vishnu'; where Darshana means 'correctly knowing'. With various other doctrines resorting to erroneous interpretations of the Sruti texts, the true nature of the Supreme Brahman had been forgotten. Some doctrines claimed that Brahman did not exist, others claimed that Brahman is formless and attributeless; some claimed that all gods were equal; some denied that he had a role in creations; some claimed that the Supreme Brahman was same as the individual soul. In this manner, the true nature of Lord Vishnu had been misrepresented and the correct import of Vêdānta had been vitiated. Therefore in order to establish the truth behind the true nature of Supreme Brahman, to show clearly that Lord Vishnu is the Supreme Sovereign Overlord above all, and to establish His true form replete with limitless auspicious attributes, Rāmānuja took birth in the age of Kali. He saved the Parabrahman from drowning into the powerful currents of fallacious interpretations. He was keen in showing Lord Vishnu as He is! Such is the other sense of the term 'Vishnor-darshana'.

Since the doctrine propounded by Rāmānuja was for the purpose of showing the true nature of Vishnu - 'Vishnoho Darshana', Rāmānuja became 'Vishnor Darshana Sthāpaka', i.e. one who

established a doctrine to show the true nature of Vishnu. Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika indicates this unique aspect of the doctrine of Rāmānuja in the 33<sup>rd</sup> stanza of his Yatirāja Saptati '*lakshmīkānta sphatika mukuro lakshmanāryopadeśah*'. He mentions that the doctrine of Rāmānuja is a crystal mirror 'Spatika Mukuro' reflecting the Lord of Lakshmi verily as He is! Unlike an ordinary mirror that may distort the image, the works of Rāmānuja are flawless and reflect the Lord of Lakshmi in His true form! In this sense also, the use of the term 'Vishnor Darshana' is apt!

The term 'Vishnor-darshana' also indicates another important fact. The root word 'Vis' in Vishnu means 'to enter'. The Supreme Lord Vishnu has pervaded the entire universe as the inner self. The doctrine of Vêdānta teaches this quintessential truth about the nature of the Supreme Self. In order to bring out this essence of Vêdānta, Vyāsa composed the Brahma Mīmāṃsā or the Brahma Sutras. The Brahma Sutras deal with the nature of the body, the self and of the innermost self- Vishnu. For this reason the Brahma Sutras are also called 'Sāriraka Shāstrā' or literally 'the doctrine that teaches the body-soul relationship'! In order to establish the import of the 'Sāriraka Shāstrā' or 'Brahma Sutras' (Vishnor-darshana) Rāmānuja composed the Śrī Bhāṣya! Such is the meaning.

By these facts, we can comprehend the greatness of Âchārya Rāmānuja. Not only did he take birth in the age of Kali to save innumerable devotees from the ceaseless cycle of samsāra, but this great Âchārya took birth verily to save the Supreme Brahman Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Himself from drowning into the mire of fallacious interpretations! Such is the extraordinary greatness of our beloved Âchārya Rāmānuja!

Rāmānuja was extremely eager to perform his ordained task. This is because he wanted to keep up the vow he had taken in the presence of Yāmunāchārya. He was eager to fulfill the wish of Yāmuna by composing a detailed gloss on the Sutras of Bādarāyaṇa, such that it

would bring to light the true meanings of Vêdânta. This eagerness is indicated by the use of the word 'Uthsukam'.

The three wishes of Yāmuna satisfied:

अबाधितार्थैरनपायवाचां तद्व्याससूत्रस्य यथार्थभाष्यम् ।  
 कृत्वा यतीन्द्रो धुरि यामुनार्यमनोरथं पूरितवान् स आद्यम् ॥  
 abādhitārthairanapāyavācāṃ tadvyāsasūtrasya yathārthabhāṣyam .  
 kṛtvā yatīndrō dhuri yāmunāryamanōratham pūritavān sa ādyam ..

*"By composing an immaculate and detailed gloss on the  
 Sutras of Vyāsa and thereby elucidating its true import,  
 Yatirāja carried out the foremost wish of Yāmunāchārya!"*

भट्टारकं तं च पराशराख्यं कृत्वा कृतं तेन सहस्रनाम्नाम् ।  
 भाष्यं प्रतिष्ठाप्य स यामुनार्यमनोरथं पूरितवान् द्वितीयम् ॥  
 bhaṭṭārakam taṃ ca parāśarākhyam kṛtvā kṛtam tēna sahasranāmnām .  
 bhāṣyam pratiṣṭhāpya sa yāmunāryamanōratham pūritavān dvitīyam ..

*"Yatirāja gave the name Parāshara Bhattar to that child  
 (born to Kūresha) and entrusted him with the task of  
 composing a gloss on the Vishnu Sahasranāma!  
 By this he carried out the second wish of Yāmunāchārya!"*

पिल्लानभिख्यं कुरुकेश्वराख्यं कृत्वा तु तं तत्कृत षट्सहस्रम् ।  
 भाष्यं प्रतिष्ठाप्य स यामुनार्यमनोरथं पूरितवांस्तृतीयम् ॥  
 pillānabhikhyam kurukēśvarākhyam kṛtvā tu taṃ tatkrta ṣaṭsahasram .  
 bhāṣyam pratiṣṭhāpya sa yāmunāryamanōratham pūritavāṃstṛtīyam ..

*"Yatirāja bestowed the name 'Kurukeshvara' upon Pillān! Having  
 then established the commentary of the six thousand composed  
 by Pillān, Yatirāja fulfilled the third wish of Yāmunāchārya!"*

-Yatirāja Vaibhavam, 71, 80 and 84

Rāmānuja composed nine divine works- Gita Bhāshya, Śrī Bhāshya, Vēdānta Sāra, Vēdānta Deepa, Vēdārtha Sangraha, the three Gadyas- Śrīranga Gadya, Sharanagati Gadya, Vaikunta Gadya, and lastly Nitya grantham.

In order to carry forward the glory of the system established by him, and to perform the Panchasamskāra or initiation of disciples into the Śree Vaishnava fold, Âchārya Rāmānuja established seventy four 'Simhāsana Adhipatis'. He also installed 700 Jiyars and 12,000 Ekangis.

Rāmānuja's chief disciples were- Kūresha or Śrī Vatsanka Mishra (of Kūram), Embār or Govinda (son of Rāmānuja's mother's sister, therefore the maternal cousin of Rāmānuja), Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān (son of Rāmānuja's mother's brother, therefore maternal cousin of Rāmānuja), Pranatārtihara or Kidāmbi Âcchan (who served as the cook of Rāmānuja, and was the cousin of Pillān), Nadādur Āļvān or Varada Vishnu Mishra (nephew of Rāmānuja), Mudaliyandan or Dāsharathi (another nephew of Rāmānuja), Parāshara Bhattar (son of Kūresha), Vatuka Nambi or Āndhrapurna, and Anantāchārya or Ananthālvān.

Śrī Rāmānuja's occupies a unique position in the unbroken immaculate garland of illustrious Âchāryas. If every Âchārya in the Guruparampara is compared to a precious gem, in the garland of such gems, the pre-eminent Rāmānuja is the 'Nayaka-mani' or the 'central gem'. A central gem beautifies both sides of a garland. So too, the central gem of Rāmānuja glorifies the two sides of the Guruparampara Hāra (garland of Âchāryas)! This has been brought out in this most beautiful verse of Yatirāja Saptati:

अमुना तपनातिशायि भूम्ना  
यतिराजेन निबद्ध नायकश्रीः ।

महती गुरुपङ्क्ति हारयष्टिः  
विबुधानां हृदयङ्गमा विभाति ॥

amunā tapanātiśāyi bhūmnā  
yatirājēna nibaddha nāyakaśrīḥ .  
mahatī gurupaṅkti hārayaṣṭiḥ  
vibudhānām ḥṛdayaṅgamā vibhāti .

*"The gem-string garland composed of excellent preceptors is adorned with the beautiful central gem called Yatirāja, whose lustre exceeds the brilliance of the blazing sun and shines forth as being exceedingly dear to the wise men!"*

Such is the abounding glory of our dear Âchārya Rāmānuja, the king among ascetics!

Installation of Archā of Rāmānuja at various places:

Prior to his leaving this earth, Rāmānuja himself consecrated three immovable idols of his in stone. The first was at Tirunārāyanapuram, wherein he embraced a stone image of himself, infused his divine spiritual energy into it and then had it installed for the benefit of devotees who could not return with him to Śrīrangam. Much later, the devotees residing at Śrīperumbudur had cast another image of the Âchārya. Pleased with their act, Rāmānuja transferred a portion of his energy into that archa vighraha as well. During his last moments, he had another image of himself made. Having breathed into the crown of the head, he transmitted his own divine energy into it. This Archā Vighram was installed as the Moola Bera at Śrīrangam.

Following his ascent to the Supreme realm of Vaikuntam, his closest disciples lead by Tirukurugai Pirān Pillān, set up Utsava Archā Vighrams of Âchārya Rāmānuja. Pillān consecrated the Utsava Archā at Śrīrangam. Swāmi Mudaliyandān had the image of

the Âchârya installed at Śrīperumbudur while Nadâdur Âļvân installed one at Perumâl Koil, Kānchipuram. Kidāmbi Âcchan installed the Utsava Archā of Rāmānuja at Tirunārāyanapuram. Pillai Tirumala Nambi (also called Satakopa Deśika, the elder son of Tirumala Nambi) then installed the Moola and Utsava images of Śrī Rāmānuja in upper Tirumala (within the precincts of temple of Lord Tiruvēnkataṁudayān) and at lower Tirupathi.

The Taniyan of Âchârya Rāmānuja composed by his foremost disciple Śrī Kūresha:

योनित्यमच्युतपदांबुजयुग्मरुक्म  
व्यामोहतः तदितराणि तृणाय मेने ।  
अस्मद्गुरोर्भगवतोस्य दयैकसिन्धोः  
रामानुजस्य चरणौ शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥

yōnityamacyutapadāmbujayugmarukma  
vyāmōhataḥ taditarāṇi tṛṇāya mēnē .  
asmadgurōrbhagavatōsya dayaikasindhōḥ  
rāmānujasya caraṇau śaraṇaṁ prapadyē ..

*"I seek refuge at the feet of Śrī Rāmānuja, our  
divine Guru, the ocean of compassion; who being  
enamored by the wealth of the twin lotus feet of Lord  
Achyutha, considered every other thing as mere straw!"*

Swāmi Vēdānta Deśika has composed the Yatirāja Saptati Stotra in praise of Âchârya Rāmānuja. The following verse from the Yatirāja Saptati is also recited as a Taniyan:

प्रणामं लक्ष्मणमुनिः प्रतिगृह्णातु मामकम् ।  
प्रसाधयति यत्सूक्तिः स्वाधीनपतिकां श्रुतिम् ॥

praṇāmaṃ lakṣmaṇamuniḥ pratigrhṇātu māmakaṃ .  
prasādhayati yatsūktiḥ svādhīnapatikāṃ śrutim ..

*"May Lakshmanamuni, whose works adorn the  
Śruti to whom the Lord is a deeply devoted  
husband, accept these salutations of mine!"*

The following verse of Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika beautifully  
summarizes the advent of the doctrine of Rāmānuja:

नाथोपज्ञं प्रवृत्तं बहुभिरुपचितं यामुनेयप्रबन्धैः ।  
त्रातं सम्यग्यतीन्द्रैरिदमखिलतमः कर्शनं दर्शनं नः ॥

nāthōpajñam pravṛttam bahubhirupacitaṃ yāmunēyaprabandhaiḥ .  
trātaṃ samyagyatīndrairidamakhilatamaḥ karśanaṃ darśanaṃ naḥ ..

*"Established by Nāthamuni, further nurtured by  
Yāmunāchārya by means of composing various works  
and protected by Rāmānuja by reconciling as a whole,  
this doctrine of ours is adept at destroying all ignorance!"*

-Tattva Mukta Kalāpam, 496

Nāthamuni commenced or began (pravṛttam) elucidating the  
doctrine, Yāmunāchārya nurtured (upacita) the doctrine by  
abundantly furnishing numerous works that further explained its  
tenets, and Rāmānuja protected (trāta) the doctrine and systematized  
as a whole and in a clear and correct manner (samyak).

The following beautiful verse, attributed to Swāmi Embār, also  
captures the glory of the Sampradāya upto this point:

लक्ष्मीनाथाख्य सिन्धौ शठरिपुजलदः प्राप्य कारुण्यनीरं  
नाथाद्रौ अभ्यषिञ्चत् तदनु रघुवराम्भोजचक्षुः झराभ्यां ।

गत्वा तां यामुनाख्यां सरितमथ यतीन्द्राख्य पद्माकरेन्द्रं  
संपूर्य प्राणिसस्ये प्रवहति बहुधा देशिकेन्द्रप्रमोद्यैः ॥

lakṣmīnāthākhyā sindhau śaṭharipujaladaḥ prāpya kāruṇyaṁ rāṃ  
nāthādrau abhyaṣiṇcat tadanu raghuvarāmbhōjacakṣuḥ jharābhyāṃ .  
gatvā tāṃ yāmunākhyāṃ saritamatha yatīndrākhyā padmākarēndraṃ  
sampūrya prāṇisasyē pravahati bahudhā dēśikēndrapramōghaiḥ ..

*"From the vast ocean of mercy known as the Lord of Lakshmi, the cloud called Sātāri gathers the waters and pours it profusely onto the mountain called Nāthāmuni! From there, two waterfalls in the name of Rāmamishra and Pundarikāksha lead into a flowing river called Yāmuna! This river empties (through five channels) into a great excellent lake (abode of lotus) called Yatirājā! The waters of this best among lakes sustain the entirety of crops by flowing through manifold streams in the form of preceptors!"*

तुलायां वेङ्कटाद्रौ तु पूर्वाषाढा समुद्भवम् ।  
 कुरुकेशं प्रचण्डांशं वन्दे श्रीशैलपूर्णजम् ॥ १७

tulāyaṃ vēṅkaṭādrau tu pūrvāṣāḍha samudbhavam .  
 kurukēśaṃ pracaṇḍāṃśaṃ vandē śrīśailapūrṇajam .. 17

Tulāyām:	in the month of Tula
Vēṅkatādrau:	at Vēṅkatādri
Tu:	verily
Purvāshādā:	under the constellation of Purvaashādā
Samudbhavam:	born
Kurukesham:	(the one named after) the Lord of Kuruka
Prachandāmsam:	an incarnation of Prachanda
Vande:	I worship
Śrisailapurnajam:	the son of Śrisailapurna

*"I worship Kurukेशa, verily the incarnation of Prachanda, who was born at Vēṅkatādri as the son of Śrisailapurna, in the month of Tula under the asterism of Purvāshādā!"*

#### Notes:

Tiru Kurugai Pirān Pillān was the second son of Śrisailapurna or Tīrumala Nambi, the maternal uncle of Rāmānuja. Therefore Pillān was the cousin of Rāmānuja. Pillān was born at Tirumala, in the Kali year 4163, the cyclic year of Plava, in the month of Aipisi, under the Asterism of Purvāshādā, Shukla Panchami. The English equivalent date can be calculated as Sunday, October 21, 1061 C.E. He was a incarnation of the Nitya Sūri Prachanda, one of the gate-keepers of Vishnu. He belonged to the Shatamarshana Gotra.

Even as a young boy, Pillān showed intuitive interest in understanding of the Divya Prabandham. During the discourses on Tiruvaimoļi given by his father, Pillān would often listen with utmost attention. Tirumala Nambi also saw that his son Pillān had qualities resembling that of his nephew Rāmānuja. Noting the keen

interest of his son, Nambi considered him worthy of receiving Yatirāja's grace.

At this time, Ācchan of the Kidāmbi family of Âtreya Gotra, also called Pranatārtihara, who was the son of the brother of Tirumala Nambi's wife, came to Tirumala to study the scriptures at the feet of Tirumala Nambi. Pranatārtihara was born in the Kali year 4159 at Kānchipuram and was elder to Pillān. He was an incarnation of the Nitya Sūri Chanda. The cyclic year of birth was Hevilamba, month of Chittirai, under the Asterism of Hasta, on a Shukla Dwadasi. The English equivalent date is Saturday, April 19, 1057 C.E.

Pillān and his cousin Pranatārtihara mastered the Vêdānta, Divya Prabandha and other such important works under the guidance of Tirumala Nambi. In the meanwhile, some Śree Vaishnavās who came to Tirumala from Śrirangam narrated the greatness of Rāmānuja to Tirumala Nambi. While Nambi's heart rejoiced, Pillān became acquainted with the greatness of Rāmānuja.

At the appropriate time, Tirumala Nambi married off Pillān to a pious and devout girl. In accordance with the will of Lord Tiruvēnkataṁudayān, Tirumala Nambi then sent both his disciples-Pranatārtihara and Pillān, the incarnations of the Nitya Sūris Chanda and Prachanda, to seek the refuge of Âchārya Rāmānuja. Having arrived at Perumāl Koil in Kanchi, the two of them first bowed to Lord Varadarāja and Perundevi Tāyār. Then proceeding to Śrirangam, they sought refuge at the feet of Yatirāja. Rāmānuja accepted them into his fold.

At around this time, was the occurrence of an incident when Rāmānuja's food was poisoned. By the grace of the Lord of Arangam, Rāmānuja was somehow spared from partaking the poisoned food. Hearing of this incident, Tirukkottiyur Nambi and Periya Tirumalai Nambi rushed forth to Śrirangam.

## The glory of Kidāmbi Ācchan:

At that time a memorable event occurred which highlights the immense love that Kidāmbi Ācchan had for his Āchārya Rāmānuja. When Rāmānuja heard of the arrival of Tirukkottiyur Nambi and Periya Tirumalai Nambi, he went to the banks of Tirukkāveri to receive them. It was a hot afternoon, and the blazing sun had scorched the sand along the banks of the sacred river. Rāmānuja however prostrated at the feet of his Gurus. When a disciple prostrates at the feet of a Guru, he continues to do so until the Guru asks him to stop. Rāmānuja did accordingly, not paying attention to the hot sand that had begun to scorch his tender body. Tirukkottiyur Nambi silently observed, without instructing Rāmānuja to stop!

The disciples of Rāmānuja, who had gathered there, started to feel uncomfortable looking at disturbing situation their revered Āchārya was put in. None however dared to speak, for they were not willing to risk the wrath of Tirukkottiyur Nambi. Kidāmbi Ācchan was unable to bear this any longer. Tears rolled down his eyes as he felt the pain his Āchārya was going through. At once, he picked up Rāmānuja and hugged him to his chest, saying that a Guru would never put a disciple's life in danger!

Tirukkottiyur Nambi was looking for this disciple of Rāmānuja! He who put his Āchārya's welfare above everything else would be the befitting one to care for Rāmānuja. Kidāmbi Ācchan's single pointed concern was Rāmānuja's welfare. Nambi then put Pranatārtihara in charge of the kitchen of Rāmānuja so that no further danger may befall the Āchārya. This was a great honor for Ācchan, since closely serving one's Āchārya is a fortune that is not easily attained. Pranatārtihara was therefore also called Tiru Madaippalli Ācchan.

Madaippalli Ācchan and Pillān continued their studies by learning the Śrī Bhāshya and other works directly from Rāmānuja. It is by their close association with him and devout service rendered to him

that they became steeped in right knowledge and supreme devotion. By repeated hearing of the quintessential Vedāntic truths from Rāmānuja himself, Kidāmbi Ācchan became extremely well versed in the teachings of Rāmānuja- especially related to Vedānta and the esoteric truths or ‘Mantra Rahasyas’. In fact, Ācchan came to be known as the ‘Udayana of Vēdānta’ (with reference to Udayanācharya- a 10<sup>th</sup> century expert on Nyāya. Just as Udayana was to Nyāya, Ācchan was to the Vēdānta). The Taniyan for this great Āchārya is:

आत्रेयगोत्रसम्भूतमाश्रये श्रितवत्सलम् ।

यतीन्द्रमाहानसिकं प्रणतार्तिहरं गुरुम् ॥

ātrēyagōtrasambhūtamāśrayē śritavatsalam

yatīndramāhānasikam praṇatārtiharam gurum .

*“I surrender to the cook of Yatirāja, Ātreya Pranatārtihara Guru, the one who is compassionate towards those who have sought refuge!”*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

### The glory of Pillān:

On one occasion, Rāmānuja was contemplating on the inner meaning of a verse from the Tamil prabandham of Tiruvaimozhi. At that time, Pillān was standing across the door and watching Rāmānuja (contemplating upon the Tamil verse) through the keyhole. Merely looking at the expressions of Rāmānuja, Pillān at once could recognize that the verse was related to the praise of the Lord at Tirumāliirunjolai. He enquired this of Rāmānuja, speaking aloud across the door! Surprised at the strange question, Rāmānuja guessed that it could only be Pillān who was capable of such a thorough understanding of the Tiruvaimoḷi. His assumption proved right when he noticed that it was indeed Pillān who had correctly announced the inner sense of the passage, standing across the door. At once he embraced him and called Pillān as his own ‘Jnāna Putra’. Jnāna Putra means ‘spiritual son and heir’ or a ‘son born of

his knowledge'. Rāmānuja then instructed Pillān in the quintessential meanings of the entire Divya Prabandham as he himself had earlier imbibed the meanings through tradition of Nāthamuni. He also taught Pillān the inner meaning of the esoteric Tirumantra, explaining the Swaroopa, Roopa and Purushārtha aspect of Lord Śrīman Nārāyana as embedded within the Tiruvaimoḷi!

Knowing Pillān's intuitive understanding of and thorough mastery over the Divya Prabandham, Rāmānuja asked him to compose a detailed gloss on the Tiruvaimoḷi of Nammāḷvār. Out of utmost respect for his Âchārya, Pillān began his work by invoking the same 'Mangala Śloka' that Rāmānuja had composed earlier for the Śrī Bhāshya. Upon completion of the gloss under the guidance of Rāmānuja, the work contained in total six thousand padis (with 32 syllables each), along the lines of Vishnu Purāna. Pillān offered the work to Yatirāja for review. Convinced that Pillān had grasped the true inner sense of these passages in a flawless manner, Rāmānuja honored him with the name of Śātāri and called him 'Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān'. Rāmānuja blessed the work as 'Bhagavad Vishayam'. By doing this, and by having Pillān compose the Ārāyiarappadi, Rāmānuja had satisfied the third wish of Yāmunāchārya!

When Rāmānuja systematized and organized the worship and the chanting of the Divya Prabandham during the Adhyayanotsavam at Srirangam, it was Pillān who composed the famous verse

सर्वदेशदशाकालेषु अव्याहत पराक्रम ।

रामानुजार्यदिव्याज्ञा वर्धतां अभिवर्धताम् ॥

sarvadēśadaśākālēṣu avyāhata parākrama .

rāmānujāryadivyaññā vardhatām abhivardhatām ..

*"In all places, at all times, under all circumstances, in an unobstructed manner, and with abounding strength, may the divine commandments of revered Rāmānuja grow and ever grow!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Prior to his leaving the mortal body, Âchârya Rāmānuja established seventy four ‘Simhāsana Adhipatis’ to propagate his doctrine. Of these 74, Rāmānuja appointed four Śrī Bhāshya Simhāsanādhipatis, including Pillān, Nadādur Āļvān, Mudaliyandan and Pranatārtihara. Of these four, Pillān was appointed as the Śrī Bhāshya Bhagavad Vishaya Ubhaya Simhāsanādhipati. Rāmānuja also gave to Pillān his personal deity of Varadarāja and the Archā of Hayagreeva bestowed upon him by Goddess Saraswathi at Kashmir Sharada Pita.

Being the ‘Jnāna Putra’ of Rāmānuja, it was Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān who performed the ‘Charama Kainkaryams’ of Âchârya at Śrīrangam! He also installed the Moola Bera Archā Vighraha of Âchârya Rāmānuja at Śrīrangam.

### **Vishnuchitta, the disciple of Pillān:**

When Rāmānuja was more than a hundred years old, a young boy from the city of Tiruvellarai, a devotee of Lord Pundarikāksha Perumāḷ, came to Śrīrangam seeking the refuge of the great Rāmānuja. The name of this young boy was Vishnuchitta. He was born at Tiruvellarai in a family of Purvashikha brahmins of Shatamarshana gotra, in the Kali year 4208, the cyclic year of Vyaya, in the month of Āni, under the Asterism of Svati, on Shukla Paksha Dwadasi. The English equivalent of this date is calculated as Thursday, June 14, 1106 C.E. He was an incarnation of the Nitya Sūri Vijaya. Rāmānuja, pleased with the devotion and service rendered to him by young Vishnu Chitta called him lovingly as ‘Engal Āļvān’, ‘Our Āļvān’. Rāmānuja entrusted him under the care of Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān. At the feet of this Ubhaya Vedāntāchârya, Engal Āļvān mastered the scriptures, the works of Rāmānuja and the Bhagavad Vishayam. Pillān had a son by the name of Pillai Tirumala Nambi, who also was a co-disciple with Engal Āļvān at the feet of his father. Engal Āļvān composed many works among which one was a detailed gloss on the Purana Ratnam

Vishnu Puranam, and was called 'Vishnu Chittiyam'. He has also authored the Prameya Sangraham.

All these facts have been recorded in the following verses, which are the Taniyans of Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān:

पितामहस्यापि पितामहस्य सुतं वरेण्यं शठकोपसूक्तेः ।

सहस्रषट्संख्यकभाष्यकारं शठारिनामानमहं प्रपद्ये ॥

pitāmahasyāpi pitāmahasya sutam varēṇyam śaṭhakōpasūktēḥ .  
sahasraṣaṭsaṅkhyakabhāṣyakāraṁ śaṭhārināmānamahaṁ prapadyē .

*"We seek refuge in the one named Śatāri, who wrote the celebrated commentary of the six thousand (Ārāyirappadi) on the divine compositions of Śrī Śatakopa, and who is the son of Śrī Śailapurna (the one known as the grandfather of Brahma)!"*

- Taniyans of Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān  
Source Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Chaturmukha Brahma, the creator of the universe, is known as the grandfather for the entire creation! Lord Vishnu, whose lotus navel gave birth to the four-faced Brahma, is therefore the father of Brahma; and He is called Pra-pitāmaha-the great grandfather for the entire creation! On one occasion, Lord Vishnu in His Archāvātara as Lord Venkateshwara manifested in front of Śrī Śailapurna. Appearing in the form of a Fowler, the Lord addressed Śrī Śailapurna as 'Tātā' or father, requesting him for water to drink. In this context, Śrī Śailapurna became the father of Lord Vishnu and is therefore considered as 'Pitāmahasyāpi Pitāmahāya' i.e. 'the grandfather of the grandsire Chaturmukha Brahma'. Pillān, the second son of Śrī Śailapurna, is therefore referred to as 'Pitāmahasyāpi Pitāmahasya Sutam'! Upon the instruction of Rāmānuja, Pillān composed a gloss on the Tiruvaimoḷi of

Nammālvār. This gloss contained six thousand padis and is therefore called as Ārāyarappadi!

विख्यातो यतिसार्वभौमजलधेश्चन्द्रोपमत्वेनयः ।  
 श्रीभाष्येणयदन्वयात्सुविदिताः श्रीविष्णुचित्तादयः ॥  
 व्याख्यां भाष्यकृदाज्ञयोपनिषदां यो द्रामिडीनां व्यधात् ।  
 पूर्वं तं कुरुकेश्वरं गुरुवरं कारुण्यपूर्णं भजे ॥

vikhyātō yatisārvabhaumajaladhēścandrōpamatvēnayaḥ  
 śrībhāṣyēṇayadanvayātsuviditāḥ śrīviṣṇucittādayaḥ .  
 vyākhyāṃ bhāṣyakṛdājñayōpaniṣadāṃ yō drāmiḍīnāṃ vyadhāt .  
 pūrvam taṃ kurukēśvaram guruvaram kāruṇyapūrṇam bhajē ..

*"We worship the all compassionate Śrī Kurukesha who is verily celebrated as the moon for the ocean called Rāmānuja; by whose association Śrī Vishnuchitta and others clearly understood the Śrī Bhāshya; and the one who wrote the gloss for the Dramida Upanishad upon the command of Śrī Bhāshyakāra!"*

- Taniyans of Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān  
 Source Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

This extraordinary verse brings out the glory of Tiru Kurugai Pirān Pillān, who was appointed by Rāmānuja as Ubhaya Simhāsanādhipati! Śrī Vishnuchitta, Somayāji Āndān and other such eminent disciples studied the Śrī Bhāshya by serving at the feet of Pillān. The traditional knowledge of the Śrī Bhāshya was therefore taught to deserving disciples. Pillān's elaborate gloss on the Tiruvaimoḷi of Nammālvār was approved and blessed by Rāmānuja as 'Bhagavad Vishayam'. This celebrated gloss became the basis for all expositions on the Tiruvaimoḷi by later Āchāryas! Thus Pillān occupies a central position in both Śrī Bhāshya and Bhagavad Vishayam disciplinic successions!

ज्ञानात्मजो यतिपतेरपि पादुकेति  
श्रीकूरनाथमुखदेशिकपूजितो यः ।  
व्याख्यातवान् शठरिपोश्चरमप्रबन्धं  
वन्देयदेशिकमहं कुरुकेश्वरम् तम् ॥

jñānātmajō yatipatērapī pādukēti  
śrīkūranāthamukhadēśikapūjitō yaḥ .  
vyākhyātavān śaṭharipōścarama prabandham  
vandēyadēśikamaham kurukēśvaram tam ..

*"We worship Guru Kuruksha, the author of the gloss on the final composition of Śatāri (Tiruvaimoḷi), who is even revered by Śrī Kūresha and others as the sandals of Rāmānuja and as the 'Jnāna Putra' or 'spiritual son of Rāmānuja!'"*

- Taniyans of Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān  
Source Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Rāmānuja considered Pillān to be his own 'Spiritual-son' or 'Wisdom-child'! Pillān served at the feet of Rāmānuja at all times. Kūresha (although much elder to Pillān), and other disciples of Rāmānuja, held Pillān in high regard and revered him. Out of such respect, Śrī Kūresha and others considered Pillān to verily be the sandals 'Pāduka' of their Āchārya Rāmānuja! Pillān is therefore celebrated as the 'Tiruvadinilai' or sandals of Rāmānuja. \*

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\* Mudaliyandān is also considered as the Tiruvadinilai of Rāmānuja. However, the Ārāyirappadi also indicates that Rāmānuja considered Mudaliyandān as his 'Tridanda', triple staff. The same view is expressed in Rāmānuja Ashtottara of Prappannāmrtam: पवित्रीकृतकूरेशो भागिनेयत्रिदण्डकः । pavitrikṛtakūrēśō bhāginēya tridaṇḍakaḥ.

यः पर्याप्तकलाख्यातो यतिराजाब्धिचन्द्रमाः ।  
कुशलं दिशतान्मेऽसौ कुरुकेश्वरदेशिकः ॥

yaḥ paryāptakalākhyātō yatirājābdhicandramāḥ .  
kuśalam diśatānmēsau kurukēśvaradēśikah .

*"May this Kurukesha, who is considered as the full  
Moon, replete with all parts, for the ocean  
called Yatirāja, bestow prosperity on me!"*

- Taniyans of Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān  
Source Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

The moon took birth from the Ksheerabdhi (Milky Ocean) during the churning of the ocean for nectar. The ocean and moon therefore bear the relationship of father-son. So too, Pillān being the 'knowledge-child' of Rāmānuja becomes the 'full moon' for the ocean called Yatirāja! Moreover, unlike the moon, Pillān was a 'Paryāptakalākhyato Chandramā', i.e. a full moon replete with all parts! The full moon, over the course of the month, begins to loose its full presentation (it looses its parts or kala), while Pillān, at all times, is replete with all portions. There is a pun here on the word kala which can also mean 'skills'. Pillān was an Ubhaya Vêdāntin par excellence- he was replete with all the arts or skills. Thus the comparison to a moon that is replete with all portions!

The comparison of Pillān with the moon and that of Rāmānuja with the ocean carries another significance. The moon is able to agitate the waters of the oceans. So too, the mind of Yatirāja is agitated in a positive sense of excitement and happiness upon beholding his spiritual-child Pillān!

The Taniyan of Engal Ālvān as composed by his disciple Nadādur Ammāl:

श्रीविष्णुचित्तपदपङ्कजसंगमाय  
चेतो मम स्पृहयते किमतः परेण ।  
नो चेन्ममापि यतिशेखरभारतीनां  
भावः कथं भवितुमर्हति वाग्विधेयः ॥

śrīviṣṇucittapadapaṅkajasaṅgamāya  
cētō mama spr̥hayatē kimataḥ parēṇa .  
nō cēnmamāpi yatiśēkharabhāratīnām  
bhāvaḥ katham bhavitumarhati vāgvidhēyaḥ ..

*"My mind desires the contact with the lotus feet of Śri Vishnuchitta, beyond which there is nothing superior! Without such contact how could a person like me ever comprehend and express in words the utterances of the Emperor among ascetics?"*

चैत्रे चित्रोद्भवं काञ्च्यां देवराजगुरोः सुतम् ।

सुभद्रांशं गुरुत्तंसं वात्स्यं वरदमाश्रये ॥ १८

caitrē citrōdbhavaṃ kāñcyāṃ dēvarājagurōḥ sutam .

subhadrāṃśaṃ gurūttamsaṃ vātsyaṃ varadamāśrayē .. 18\*

Chaitre:	in the month of Chaitra
Chitrodbhavam:	born under the constellation of Chitra
Kāñchyaam:	at Kāñchipuram
Devarāja Guroho Sutam:	the son of Devarāja Guru
Subhadrāmsam:	the incarnation of Nitya Suri Subhadra
Guruttam:	the great / foremost Guru /Mahāguru
Sam Vātsyam Varadam:	to him Vātsya Varada Guru
Aasraye:	I surrender

*"I surrender to the great preceptor Vātsya Varadācharya, the incarnation of Nitya Sūri Subhadra, who was born in the month of Chaitra under the asterism of Chitra at Kāñchipuram, as the son of Devarāja Guru!"*

## Notes:

Vātsya Varada Guru, also called Nadādur Ammāl, was the grandson of the great Śrī Bhāshya Simhāsanādhipati Nadādur Ājvān.

Nadādur Ājvān also called Varada Vishnu Mishra was the nephew of Rāmānuja through his sister Kamala Devi. He was of the Śrīvatsa Gotra and hailed from the village of Nadādur. He is also called as Vātsyanātha or the chief of those who belong to the

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\*Variation of this Śloka from other sources:

चैत्रे चित्रोद्भवं काञ्च्यां देवराज गुरोः सुतम् ।

सुभद्रांशं महोदारं वरदं गुरुं आश्रये ॥

caitrē citrōdbhavaṃ kāñcyāṃ dēvarāja gurōḥ sutam .

subhadrāṃśaṃ mahōdāraṃ varadaṃ gurum āśrayē ..

Śrivatsa Gotra. He was the 'Priya Bhāgineya', the 'beloved nephew' of Rāmānuja. The Taniyan for this Âchārya is:

यस्मिन् पदं यतिपतेर्वदनारविन्दात्  
निष्क्रमादेव निधत्ते निगमान्तभाष्यम् ।  
तस्यैव ताम् भगवता प्रियभागिनेयम्  
वन्दामहे वरदविष्णुपदाभिधेयम् ॥

yasmin padaṃ yatipatērvadanāravindāt  
niṣkramādēva nidhattē nigamāntabhāṣyam .  
tasyaiva tām bhagavatā priyabhāginēyam .  
vandāmahē varadaviṣṇupadābhidhēyam .

*"I bow to the one named Varada Vishnu, in whom the the Vēdānta Bhāshya takes its step even as it emanates from the lotus like mouth the Emperor among ascetics, and who was verily the beloved nephew of the revered Rāmānuja himself!"*

His son was Devarāja Perumāl. The Taniyan for this Âchārya is:

नमो वेदान्तवाक्यार्थविवदे भेदवादिभिः ।  
वितीर्णजयपात्राय देवराजविपश्चिते ॥

namō vēdāntavākyaārthavivadē bhēdavādibhiḥ ..  
vitīrṇajayapātrāya dēvarājaviapaścītē ..

*"Salutations to the great Scholar named Devaraja, to whom during the debates on the purport of Upanishadic statements, the opponents from the school of Abhedha (identifying the Jeeva and Paramatma as one entity) had offered 'Jayapātra' - the letter confirming his victory and their defeat!"*

To Devarāja Perumāl a child was born, as the incarnation of the Nitya Sūri Subhadra, in the Kali year 4267, being cyclic year of Parthiva, month of Chittirai, under the Asterism of Chitra, on a Poornima- a full moon day. The English calendar equivalent of this

date is calculated as Monday, March 29, 1165 C.E. The child was named Varadāchārya. He was fondly called as Nadādur Ammāl. From his father Devarāja Perumāl, Varadāchārya received Panchasamskāra, Mantra and Mantrārtha Upadesha. While teaching him the Śrī Bhāshya, Devarāja Perumāl noticed the healthy inquisitiveness and the prodigal nature of the boy with respect to understanding the doctrinal secrets. Devarāja Perumāl was by then very old. Having realized the true potential of his son, he thought that a younger preceptor who could match Ammāl's intelligence would be better suited to take up the task of teaching him the Śrī Bhāshya.

Devarāja Perumāl instructed him to proceed to the city of Tiruvellarai and seek refuge of Âchārya Engal Āļvān. Engal Āļvān did not have any male issues. When Ammāl took refuge at his feet as a disciple, Engal Āļvān told him that he would accept him as a disciple and teach the Śrī Bhāshya on one condition. Engal Āļvān wanted his final rites to be eventually performed by Ammāl, even as a son would do so for his father. After hearing this, Ammāl went back to Devarāja Perumāl to seek his permission before making the promise to Engal Āļvān. Devarāja Perumāl gave his consent with regard to this matter. Taking the Śrī Kosham of the Bhāshya, Ammāl then came back to seek refuge of Engal Āļvān. Ammāl promised that he would carry out the responsibility of both son and disciple, and thereby fulfill the wish of Engal Āļvān.

Āļvān accepted Varadāchārya as both disciple and son! He taught him the quintessential doctrinal points of the Ubhaya Vēdānta as he himself had heard from Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān. He also taught his disciple the various works of Rāmānuja including the Śrī Bhāshya, the Gadyas, and Gīta Bhāshya. Ammāl, true to his potential, showed mastery in all subjects and was indeed blessed by his guru Engal Āļvān. In this manner, Ammāl kept up his responsibility towards his Âchārya as a devout disciple.

Years later, Engal Āļvān left this mortal world. At that time, Ammāl himself performed the last rites, even as a son would perform such rites for his own father. In this way Ammāl kept up his responsibility towards Engal Āļvān verily like a son. He installed the Archā Vighraha of Engal Āļvān at Tiruvellarai and then proceeded to Kānchipuram Perumāl Koil to serve the feet of Lord Varadarāja. This Archā Vighraha of Engal Āļvān is seen even today with Ammāl at his feet- as disciple and son!

Ammāl married a pious and devout girl and had four sons. The eldest son was named Devarāja Perumāl. Around this time, Varadāchārya also composed numerous works, the most important among them being Tattva Sāra. Varadāchārya served at the feet of Lord Varadaraja of Kānchipuram.

Varadāchārya had unparalleled devotion towards Lord Varadaraja. On one occasion, milk was brought as an offering for the Lord. Realizing that the milk was extremely hot, Varadāchārya, who was witnessing this, immediately prevented the offering. He was concerned that the scorching heat of the milk would be unpalatable for his dear Lord Varada. He then began to cool it down to a temperature that would make it lukewarm and palatable. Such was the motherly concern that Varadāchārya had! Lord Varadaraja Himself acclaimed him as 'Mother' and therefore Varadāchārya became called Ammāl!

At Kānchipuram, the news of the arrival of the great Vātsya Varadāchārya created new enthusiasm among Śree Vaishnavā disciples to seek his guidance. Varadāchārya delivered daily discourses on the Śrī Bhāshya and Bhagavad Vishayam as taught to him by his Āchārya Engal Āļvān.

Varadāchārya attracted numerous significant disciples. Chief among them were-

- 1) Sudarshana Sūri, the great grandson of Rāmānuja's foremost disciple Kūresha, who came to Kanchi to seek surrender at the feet of Varadāchārya.
- 2) Kidāmbi Appullār or Âtreya Rāmānuja, the great grandson of Pranatārthihara or Kidāmbi Ācchan, the closest associate and disciple of Rāmānuja, who also sought refuge at the feet of Varadāchārya.
- 3) Naduvil Ālvān

Among important disciples were also Vadakku Tiruveedhi Pillai, and others who came from Srirangam to Perumāl Koil to learn the Śrī Bhāshya from the illustrious Guru Varadāchārya!

Varadāchārya delivered his doctrinal discourses at the Kacchi Vaitthān Mantapa, in the temple of Hastigiri, right behind the sanctum of the great Lord Varadarāja Perumāl. When he was asked by his disciples if there was any particular reason for performing the Siddhānta Pravachanam at the Kacchi Vaitthān Mantapa, Vātsya Varadāchārya replied with the following verse:

परमं तत्त्वं श्रीमानहं अपि च भेदो मम मतम्  
 प्रपत्तिस्तु उपायस्स चरमसमये न स्मृतिरपि ।  
 शरीरान्ते मोक्षो गुरुरपि महापूर्ण इति तान्  
 अवादीदर्थान् षड् वरद इह पूर्णाय हि पुरा ॥

paramaṁ tatvaṁ śrīmānahaṁ api ca bhēdō mama matam  
 prapattistu upāyassa carama samayē na smṛtirapi .  
 śarīrāntē mōkṣō gururapi mahāpūrṇa iti tān  
 avādīdarthān śaḍ varada iha pūrṇāya hi purā ..

*"Along with Śree, I am the Paratattva; the doctrine accepting difference is Mine, Prapatti is 'the' means, (by performing which) there is no need to remember Me at the time of death, Moksha*

*is attained after leaving the mortal body, and Mahapurna is the Guru to be sought! Lord Varada bestowed these six instructions through (Kanchi) Poorna in this very place previously!"*

- Verse composed by Śrī Nadādur Ammāl,  
Source Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Śrī Sudarshana Sūri documented the great discourses of Nadādur Ammāl on the Śrī Bhāshya. He took elaborate notes on the qunitessential doctrinal points as it ensued from the lotus like mouth of Âchārya Nadādur Ammāl. Showing these written notes to Ammāl, Sūri sought his blessings. Ammāl was pleased with this deed of Sudarsana Sūri and suggested that he collect his writings into a gloss and call it 'Śruta Prakāshika'. Sudarshana Sūri also composed an abridged version of the discourse of Ammāl and called it 'Śruta Pradeepika'. Sudarshana Sūri has also composed a gloss on the Apastamba Sūtras and a gloss on the Sandhyavandana Mantras.

चैत्रार्द्रा संभवं काञ्च्यां सुप्रतिष्ठांशमद्भुतम् ।  
वन्दे रामानुजार्यं निगमान्तगुरोः गुरुम् ॥ १९

caitrārdrā sambhavaṃ kāñcyāṃ supratīṣṭhāṃśamadbhutam.  
vandē rāmānujāryaṃ nigamāntagurōḥ gurum .. 19\*

Chaitra:	in the month of Chaitra
Ardra:	under the asterism of Ardra
Sambhavam:	born
Kāñchyām:	at Kanchi
Supratishtamsam:	as an incarnation of Supratishtha
Adbhutam:	extraordinary
Vande:	I bow to
Rāmānujāryam:	the revered Rāmānuja
Nigamanta Guror:	of Vēdānta Deśika
Gurum:	the preceptor

***“I bow to the preceptor of Nigamānta Guru, the revered (Ātreya) Rāmānuja, who was born at Kāñchipuram, in the month of Chaitra, under the asterism of Ardra, as an extraordinary manifestation of Suprathista!”***

#### Notes:

Kidāmbi Ācchan or Pranatārtihara, the close disciple of Rāmānuja and one of the Śrī Bhāshya Simhāsanādhipatis, had a son named Kidāmbi Rāmānuja Pillān who was born in the Kali year 4210, cyclic year of Sarvadhari, in the month of Aippasi, under the Asterism of Purvāshāda, on a Shukla Panchami. This date

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\*Variation of this Śloka from other sources:

चैत्रार्द्रा संभवं काञ्च्यां रङ्गराज गुरोः सुतम् ।  
सुप्रतिष्ठांशं आत्रेयं रामानुजगुरुं भजे ॥

caitrārdrā sambhavaṃ kāñcyāṃ raṅgarāja gurōḥ sutam.  
supratīṣṭhāṃśaṃ ātrēyaṃ rāmānujagurum bhajē ..

calculates to Sunday, October 11, 1108 C.E. The Taniyan for this Âchārya is:

आत्रेयगोत्राम्बुधिपूर्णचन्द्रमाचारयुक्तात्मगुणोपपन्नम् ।  
नतार्तिहृद्देशिकरत्नसूनुं रामानुजार्यं गुरुमाश्रयामः ॥

ātrēyagōtrāmbudhipūrṇacandramācārayuktātmaguṇōpapannam .  
natārtihṛddēśikaratnasūnuṃ rāmānujāryaṃ gurumāśrayāmaḥ ..

*"We seek refuge in Guru Rāmānuja Pillān, who is akin to a full moon for the ocean of Ātreya Gotra, who is endowed with Ātma Gunas, is well established in the right conduct, and who was born as the precious gem to Pranatārtihara (Kidāmbi Ācchan)!"*

Kidāmbi Rāmānuja Pillān had a son named Kidāmbi Śri Ranga Rājar (also called Ātreya Padmanābhārya). Ranga Rājar was born in the Kali year 4265, cyclic year of Svabhanu, in the month of Panguni, under the Asterism of Rohini, Shukla Paksha Shasti tithi. The English equivalent of this date is Sunday, March 1, 1164 C.E. The Taniyan for this Âchārya is:

रामानुजार्यतनयं रमणीयवेषं  
आत्रेयमात्मगुणपूर्णमनर्घशीलम् ।  
श्रीरङ्गराजमिव तद्वययावतीर्णं  
श्रीरङ्गराजगुरुवर्यमहं प्रपद्ये ॥

rāmānujāryatanayaṃ ramaṇīyavēṣaṃ  
ātrēyamātmaguṇapūrṇamanarghaśīlam .  
śrīraṅgarājamiva taddayayāvātīrṇaṃ  
śrīraṅgarājaguruvaryamaham prapadyē ..

*"We surrender to Śri Ranga Rājar of Ātreya gotra, the attractive form of the son of Rāmānuja Pillān, who was endowed with Ātma Guna, who possessed immaculate character, who was like Lord Sri Ranganātha Himself and was verily born due to His grace!"*

To Ranga Rājar was born Kidāmbi Appullār, in the Kali year 4322, cyclic year of Vikrama, month of Chittirai, under the Asterism of Tiru Âdirai, on Shukla Panchami Tithi, as an incarnation of the Nitya Sūri Suprathista. The English equivalent of this date is Thursday, April 9, 1220 C.E.

From his father Ranga Rājar, Appullār received the Pancha Samskārās and Mantrartha Rahasyas as taught by Kidāmbi Ācchan himself. Ranga Rājar also had a daughter by the name of Totāramba.

Kidāmbi Appullār studied the Śrī Bhāshya and the Bhagavad Vishayam at the feet of Nadādur Ammal. Kidāmbi Appullār was unconquerable in debate with opponents. Therefore he is called as 'Vādihamsambuvāha', i.e. 'the water bearing cloud for the swans in the form of opponents'. The Taniyan for this Āchārya is:

श्रीमच्छ्रीरङ्गराजाह्वयगुरुतनयं श्रीमदात्रेयगोत्रं  
श्रेयो हेतुं नतानां वरदगुरुकृपावाप्तसच्छास्त्रजातम् ।  
वेदान्ताचार्यवर्ये कृतसकरहस्तस्त्वशास्त्रादिदानं  
वन्दे रामानुजार्यं गुरुवरतिलकं वादिहंसाम्बुवाहम् ॥

śrīmacchrīraṅgarājāhvayagurutanayaṃ śrīmadātrēyagōtraṃ  
śrēyō hētuṃ natānāṃ varadagurukṛpāvāptasacchāstrajātaṃ .  
vēdāntācāryavaryē kṛtasakarahastastvaśāstrādidānaṃ  
vandē rāmānujāryaṃ guruvaratilakaṃ vādihamsāmbuvāham ..

*"I worship the son of Sri Rangaraja, i.e. Guru Vādihamsambuvāha or Ātreya Rāmānuja, the one who bestows prosperity to those who ardently bow; who obtained the knowledge of Sat-shāstra by the benevolent grace of Varadaguru; and who directly bestowed the knowledge of the shāstras and the Tattva to Śrī Vēdānta Deśika!"*

Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika has composed the following Taniyan in praise of his Âchārya Kidāmbi Appullār:

नमो रामानुजार्याय वेदान्तार्थप्रदायिने ।

आत्रेयपद्मनाभार्यसुताय गुणशालिने ॥

namō rāmānujāryāya vêdāntārthapradāyinē .

ātrēyapadmanābhāryasutāya guṇaśālinē ..

*“I worship Rāmānuja, the son of Âtreya Padmanābhārya,  
the one who possess auspicious qualities,  
the one who taught the meanings of Vêdānta!”*

नभस्य मासि श्रोणायां अनन्तार्यगुरुद्वयम् ।

श्रीवेङ्कटेशघण्टांशं वेदान्तगुरुमाश्रये ॥ २०

nabhasya māsi śrōṇāyāṃ anantāryagurūdbhavam .

śrīvēṅkaṭēśaghaṇṭāṃśaṃ vēdāntagurumāśrayē .. 20

Nabhasya:	of the rainy season
Māsi:	month of
Shronāyaam:	under the asterism of Shravana
Anantārya Guru:	Śri Anantarya
Udbavam:	born as (the son of)
Śree Venkatesa:	Lord Vēṅkatēshwara
Ghaṇṭāmsam:	the manifestation of the bell
Vēdāntagurum:	Śri Vēdānta Deśika
Aasraye:	I surrender

*"I surrender to the feet of Śri Vēdānta Deśika, the incarnation of the bell of Lord Vēṅkatēshwara, who was born as the son of Śri Anantārya in the month of Bhādrapada under the asterism of Shravana!"*

#### Notes:

Śri Vēdānta Deśika was born as the son of Anantasūri. This Anantasūri was the son of Pundarikāksha, who himself was the son of Ananta-Somayaji. Ananta-Somayaji belonged to Vishwaamitra Gotra, and was one of the 74 Simhāsana Adhipatis appointed by Rāmānuja. Anantasūri was married to Totāramba, the sister of Kidāmbi Appullār.

Anantasūri and Totāramba visited Tirumala on one occasion. Here, Totāramba had a strange dream in which she swallowed the divine bell of Lord Vēṅkatēshwara. The Lord also appeared in the dream of Anantasūri at the same time, and conveyed to him the message that a blessed son would be born to the couple who would eventually uphold the path of Vēdānta. True to the strange dreams had by the couple, the bell of Lord Vēṅkatēshwara at Tirumala was noticed to have disappeared the very next day! To this day

therefore, the use of the bell in the sanctum of Lord Vênkatesha has been altogether discontinued since its disappearance. It is for this reason that Vêdânta Deśika is also called 'Tirumani Âḷvār'! Twelve years after this incident of the disappearance of the bell at Tirumala, Śrī Vêdânta Deśika was born!

शेषाद्रीश्वरपादपद्मयुगली कैंकर्यहेतोः पुरा  
याघण्टाकिल भक्तिनम्रमनसा पद्मासनेनार्पिता ।  
तत्तत्तन्त्रपिशाचधूननकृते संकल्पतः श्रीपतेः  
जातायै निगमान्तदेशिकनिभात्कस्यैचिदस्यै नमः ॥

śēṣādriśvarapādapadmayugalī kainkaryahētōḥ purā  
yāghaṇṭākila bhaktinamramanasā padmāsanēnārpitā .  
tattattantrapiśācadhūnanakṛtē saṅkalpataḥ śrīpatēḥ  
jātāyai nigamāntadēśikanibhātkasyaicaidasyai namaḥ ..

*"The bell which was previously offered by Brahma for the appropriate, devout and reverential worship of the lotus twin feet of the Lord of Sheshadri; the bell whose reverberation drives away the host of evil demons (which have assumed the form of various doctrines); that same bell now incarnated in the form of Nigamānta Deśika in accordance with the divine will of the Lord of Śrī! Obeisance to the incarnation of that divine bell!"*

-Granthopasamhāra of the Alankāramanihāra

Vêdânta Deśika himself refers to his Avatāra Rahasya in his work called Sankalpa Suryodaya.

वित्रासिनी विबुधवैरिविरूथिनीनाम्  
पद्मासनेन परिचारिविधौ प्रयुक्त ।

उत्प्रेक्ष्यते बुधजनैः उपपत्तिभूम्ना  
घण्टा हरेः समजनिष्ट यदात्मनेति ॥

vitṛāsinī vibudhavairivirūthinīnām  
padmāsanēna paricārividhau prayukta.  
utprēkṣyatē budhajanaīḥ upapattibhūmnā  
ghaṇṭā harēḥ samajaniṣṭa yadātmanēti ..

*"Wise men, based on appropriate justification, widely consider that the divine bell of Lord Hari, which was used by the lotus-seated Brahma during worship, and the sound of which terrifies (drives away) the multitude of enemies of the learned, has now incarnated in the form of this poet!"*

Sankalpa Suryodaya; 1-14

KumāraVaradāchārya, the son of Vêdānta Deśika also records the Avatāra Rahasya of Vêdānta Deśika in his work Deśika Mangalā Shāsanā. Here, he indicates that Vêdānta Deśika was verily considered by some as the incarnation of Lord Vênkatêshwara Himself; and by others as an incarnation of Śrī Rāmānuja himself.

वेङ्कटेशावतारोयं तद्घण्टांशोऽथवा भवेत् ।  
यतीन्द्रांशो अथवेत्येवं वितर्क्यायास्तु मङ्गलम् ॥  
vēṅkaṭēśāvatārōyaṁ tadghaṇṭāṁśōthavā bhavēt .  
yatīndrāṁśō athavētyēvaṁ vitarkyāyāstu maṅgaḷam ..

*"May auspiciousness be showered on Vêdānta Deśika, who was considered as the incarnation of Lord Vênkatesha; as an incarnation of the Lord's bell; and as verily a descent of the Emperor among Ascetics (Rāmānuja) himself!"*

Deśika Mangalaa Shasanaa 4

And again,

श्रीभाष्यकारपन्थानमात्मनादर्शितं पुनः ।  
उद्धर्तुं आगतो नूनमित्युक्तायास्तु मङ्गलम् ॥  
śrībhāṣyakārapanthānamātmanādarśitaṁ punaḥ .  
uddhartuṁ āgatō nūnamityuktāyāstu maṅgaḷam .

*"Śrī Bhāṣyakāra himself reincarnated as Vêdānta Deśika for the purpose of re-establishing firmly the Vêdānta doctrine that he taught previously! May auspiciousness be showered upon Vêdānta Deśika!"*

Deśika Mangalā Shāsanā 5

Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar has also composed a verse that highlights the Avatāra Rahasya of Śrī Vêdānta Deśika:

भगवन्तमिवानन्तकल्याणगुणसागरं ।  
वेदान्तदेशिकं नौमि वेङ्कटेशगुरुत्तमम् ॥  
bhagavantamivānantakalyāṇaguṇasāgaraṁ .  
vêdāntadêśikaṁ naumi vēṅkaṭêśagurūttamam ..

*"I worship Vêdānta Deśika, the most excellent preceptor named Vēṅkatesha, who is an ocean of numerous auspicious qualities, verily like the Lord Himself!"*

There is a 'Slesha' or a pun implied with the use of the word 'Vēṅkatesha' the above verse. Being an incarnation of Lord Vēṅkatêshwara Himself, Vêdānta Deśika was a repository of the numerous auspicious attributes. And, it was Bhagavān Vēṅkatesha who Himself descended as Guru Vēṅkatesha! Such is the meaning!

Vêdānta Deśika was born at Kānchipuram, in the village of Tiruthanka, beside the shrine of Lord Deepaparakāsha or Vilakkoli Perumāl. The place is also called as Thooppul (also Thoopil), literally referring to the growth of the sacred 'Darbha' of 'Kusha'

grass here in abundance. The exact astronomical details of his birth are given as Kali 4371 current, cyclic year of Shukla, Purattāsi month (Kanya Solar month), Shukla Ekadashi, falling on a Sunday when the star of Tiruvonam (or Shravana) was in ascendance. The English calendar equivalent of this date amounts to the early morning hours of Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1269 C.E. when the tithi 11 existed at sunrise (and upto 0.05 after) and Tiruvona Nakshatra ended at 0.16 after sunrise.\*

Upon the birth of the blessed child, Śrī Anantha Sūri performed the Jatakarma rites. On the twelfth day, the Namakarna or naming ceremony was performed and the child was named 'Tiruvēṅkatamudaiyan'.

The Nakshatra of 'Tiruvonam' or 'Shravana' is important because it was the day of the scared 'Teerhotsavam' of Lord Vēṅkatēshwara. Vēdānta Deśika was therefore named 'Tiruvēṅkatamudaiyan' or 'Vēṅkatanātha' by his parents, in honor of him being born of the day of the Teerhotsavam. Moreover, the child was verily an incarnation of Lord Vēṅkatēshwara Himself, and therefore the name 'Vēṅkatanatha' was befitting!

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\* Since the exact birth lagna is not known, Swāmi's birth could have been anywhere between Saturday, September 7<sup>th</sup> Dashami to Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup> Ekadashi. However, based on the opinion of several scholars, the early morning hours of Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1269 C.E. is the view favored.

Also refer: Horoscope of Swāmi Desika cast by Keezhathoor R Srinivasāchariar, based on an earlier work by Śrī Śrisailam Tātācharya which is available on MSS palm leaves (date unknown) stored at Sherfoji Maharaja's Saraswathi Mahal Library, Tanjore. The same was published in 'aruL tarum AraNadESikan' by Lifco in 1968. This document gives the following details regarding Swāmi's birth- Shukla varsha, gatakali (expired kali) 4370 sariyāna purattasi 11 thithi, sunday, 11-28 nazhigai, shukla ekadashi 6-19 nazhigaiku thiruvona nakshatram, kanyā lagnam - thooppul punya bhoomi kacchi nagar - 11 ghatika- 28 vighatika.

भाद्रपदमासगतविष्णुविमलर्क्षे  
वेङ्कटमहीध्रपतितीर्थदिनभूते ।  
प्रादुरभवज्जगति दैत्यरिपुघण्टा हन्त  
कवितार्किकमृगेन्द्रगुरुमूर्त्या ॥

bhādrapadamāsagataviṣṇuvimalarkṣē  
vēṅkaṭamahīdhrapatitīrthadinabhūte .  
prādurabhavajjagati daityaripughanṭā hanta  
kavitārkikamṛgēndragurumūrtiā ..

*"The bell (of Lord Hari) that drives away demons, incarnated in this world under the auspicious asterism of Lord Vishnu (Shravana), occurring in the month of Bhādrapada, on the day of the Teerthotsavam of the lord of the Vēṅkata Hill, as the preceptor who was verily a lion among poets and logicians!"*

-Saptati Ratna Mālīka 10

वेङ्कटेशस्य सङ्कल्पाद् विश्वामित्रकुलाम्बुधौ ।  
घण्टाऽवतीर्णा यन्मूर्त्या तं देशिकवरं भजे ॥  
काञ्च्यां नभस्य श्रोणायाम् अनन्तार्यगुरोः सुतः ।  
जातो यो जनभागेन श्रीमन्तं तमहं भजे ॥

vēṅkaṭēśasya saṅkalpād viśvāmitrakulāmbudhau .  
ghanṭā'vatīrṇā yanmūrtiā taṁ dēśikavaram bhajē ..  
kāñcyāṁ nabhasya śrōṇāyām anantāryagurōḥ sutaḥ .  
jātō yō janabhāgyēna śrīmantam tamaham bhajē ..

*"I worship that Deśika, assuming whose form the divine bell incarnated in the lineage of Vishvāmitra by the will of Lord Venkatesha! I worship that revered one who was born at Kanchipuram, as the son of Ananta Guru, under the asterism of Shravana in the month of Nabha, for the welfare of the human race!"*

-Vēdānta Deśika Vaibhava Prakāshika 2,3

It was Attigiri Perumāl (Varadarāja Perumāl) who blessed Vêdānta Deśika at a very young age to become the ‘Darshana Pravartaka’ of the Vêdānta Siddhānta like Rāmānuja! At the completion of his first birthday- ‘Abda Poorthi’, the young child Vênkatanātha was taken to Perumāl Koil to receive the blessings of Perundevi Tāyār and Attigiri Perumāl. At that time, Lord Perarulālan bestowed a divine mandate through the agency of the priest-

नम्मिरामानुजनै प्पोले दर्शनप्रवर्तकर् आगक्कडवीर्  
nammirāmānujanai ppōlē darśanapravartakar āgakkāḍavīr

*“Like our Rāmānuja, may you also become  
the establisher of the Vêdānta doctrine!”*

- Source: Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam  
(Tamil in Devanagari script above)

Blessing him thus, Attigiri Perumāl bestowed him with the Tirtha and Prasāda!

In the third year, the ‘Chowlam’ was performed, and in the fifth year the rites of ‘Akshararambham’ were performed by Śri Anantasūri. Following this, young Vênkatanātha was put under the protective care of his maternal uncle Śri Kidāmbi Appullār. Appullār was a disciple of the great Ubhaya Simhāsanādhipati Nadādur Ammāl.

On one occasion, Appullār took the young child of five years to the Kālakshepam of Nadādur Ammāl, which was being delivered at the sacred Kacchi Vaitthān Mantapam. Appullār and the young child prostrated at the lotus feet of Nadādur Ammāl. Attracted by the brilliance that shone on the countenance of this young child, Ammāl momentarily stopped the Kālakshepam. When he enquired as to who the young child was, Appullār narrated the fact that the child was born to his sister Totāramba after she had a dream in which she swallowed the divine bell of Lord Vênkatêshwara! Ammāl at once

understood the divine nature of the child. While casting his compassionate glances on young Vēnkatanātha, Ammāl forgot the particular point where he had stopped his discourse. Young Vēnkatanātha, in an impromptu manner, indicated the exact ‘Upanyaasa Vākya’ that had been spoken by Nadādur Ammāl prior to stopping the Kālakshepam! Astonished by this, Nadādur Ammāl took the young Vēnkatanātha onto his own lap and proclaimed the following benediction:

वत्स, प्रतिष्ठापितवेदान्तः प्रतिक्षिप्तबहिर्मतः ।

भूयास्त्रैविद्यमान्यस्त्वं भूरिकल्याणभाजनम् ॥

pratiṣṭhāpitavēdāntaḥ pratikṣiptabahirmataḥ .

bhūyāstraividya mānyastvaṃ bhūrikalyāṇa bhājanam ..

*“Child! May you establish the Vēdānta by refuting the opposing doctrines, may you become the object of veneration of those who are well versed in the Vēdā, may you be the recipient of all that is auspicious!”*

- Source: Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

It may be recalled that Yāmunāchārya recognized the brilliance of Rāmānuja and foretold the fact that Rāmānuja would eventually become the Āchārya of Śree Vaishnavā Sampradāyam. In this context, it was Nadādur Ammāl who recognized the brilliance of Vēdānta Deśika and proclaimed him to become the future upholder of the Śree Vaishnavā Sampradāyam. Blessing him in this manner, Nadādur Ammāl became the Prāchārya of Vēdānta Deśika! Being the recipient of the grace and benevolence of Ammāl, Deśika eventually went on to accomplish great and noble deeds with respect to re-establishing the doctrine of Rāmānuja. In fact, it was verily the Supreme Lord Ranganātha who Himself attested this fact, and bestowed upon Deśika the ‘UbhayaVedāntāchārya Pada’!

Just as Rāmānuja directed Pillān to reveal the doctrinal secrets to Engal Āļvān, Nadādur Ammāl directed Kidāmbi Appullār to teach the quintessential doctrinal secrets including the Śrī Bhāshya, Bhagavad Vishaya and Mantra Rahasyas to Vēnkatanātha! Owing to the advanced age of Ammāl at that time, he was unable directly precept young Vēnkatanātha! When Ammāl saw young Desika of five years, he himself was aged 109 years!

Śrī Anantasūri performed the Brahmopadesham for his son Vēnkatanātha. At the age of 15, in the year C.E. 1284, Swāmi Kidāmbi Appullār performed the Vrata Samavartanam for Vēnkatanātha and got him married to young 'Tirumangaiyār'. Vēnkatanātha was blessed with a wife who was full of noble qualities and was endowed with beauty! More importantly, Tirumangaiyār was an equal match to Vēnkatanātha, befitting him in every way- '*Samānātma Guna Sampanna*'! Swāmi Vēdānta Deśika therefore lead the life of a Grihasta with his wife Tirumangaiyār.

Three other aspects regarding the Avatāra Rahasya of Swāmi Vēdānta Deśika are to be emphasized. These facts have been indicated by Vēdānta Deśika himself in his works in a subtle manner.

- 1) In the Daya Shatakam, verse 104, Deśika mentions that having placed him on the pedestal of Vedāntāchārya, Lord Vēnkatesha made him recite the Daya Shatakam even as an skilled musician would play a Veena melodiously. Here, Deśika compares himself to a Veena in the hands of Lord Vēnkatesha. The melody coming forth from this Veena of the Lord portrays the inner meanings of the sweet Tamil Divya Prabandhams. This shows the proficiency of the excellent Veena called Vēdānta Deśika in elucidating the quintessential meanings of the Divya Prabandhams!

- 2) In the penultimate verse of Adhikarana Sārāvali, Deśika mentions that Lord Ranganātha verily gave out the treatise called Adhikarana Sārāvali by employing Deśika as a Conch. Here, Deśika compares himself to the conch Panchajanya in the hands of Lord Ranganātha. The conch is an instrument used to announce the beginning of war, here signifying the polemic warfare involving the interpretation of the Brahma Sutras. When the Lord blows His conch, the resounding divine note emanating from it signifies victory and drives away all evil. The divine note coming forth from this conch of the Lord portrays the true inner meanings of the terse Sanskrit Vêdānta. This portrays the adeptness of the conch called Vêdānta Deśika in elucidating the quintessential meanings of the Vêdānta!
- 3) In the Sankalpa Suryodaya, verse 14 of Chapter 1, Deśika mentions that people appropriately considered him to be an incarnation of the Bell of Lord Hari. This Bell is the one that is used by the lotus seated God Brahma himself while performing the worship of Lord Vênkatesha. The Bell is employed in the worship of Lord Hari because the auspicious notes emanating from it drives away all evil forces. Lord Brahma performs the appropriate worship of Lord Hari by using this Bell. The words of Vêdānta Deśika are the auspicious sounds emanating from this Bell, and he is verily the Bell. This portrays the adeptness of the Bell called Vêdānta Deśika in ensuring the appropriate worship of Lord Hari!

In this manner, Vêdānta Deśika himself indicates that he was the excellent Veena in the hands of Lord Vênkatêshwara, the auspicious Panchajanya in the hands of Lord Ranganātha, and verily the divine Bell of Lord Hari! Deśika therefore considered himself to be a mere instrument in the hands of the Lord in carrying out these ordained duties!

Just as Nammālvār emphasised the efficacy of the path of Prapatti in his works, among the Âchâryas it was Vêdânta Deśika who further strengthened the Prapatti Siddhânta. Vêdânta Deśika also contributed immensely to the preservation and propagation of the Tamil Prabandhams and wove them in into the doctrine of Ubhaya Vêdânta – a confluence of the Vêdânta and the Âlvâr Divya Prabandham. In many works, Vêdânta Deśika shows that the words of the Âlvârs contain the same nectarine meanings of the Vêdās and are given to us in a much simpler way, easy to grasp. According to him, the essence of the Vêdās put into the Tamil language became the Divya Prabandham. In his Guruparampara Sāra, he refers to the Âlvârs as ‘Abhinava Dashāvatāra’ or the ‘new ten-fold incarnations’ of the Supreme Lord. The doctrine taught by Vêdânta Deśika or ‘Deśika Sampradāyam’ is therefore non-different from Ubhaya Vêdânta as taught earlier by Rāmānuja.

Śrī Vêdânta Deśika also performed the important task of clarifying the difference of opinion regarding the status of Goddess Śrīe. Various interpretations had been offered to explain the status and role of Goddess Lakshmi. Some said that She is of the nature of a Jiva or ‘individual self’, though divine. Some gave her only the role of a ‘Purushakāra’ or mediator in granting final release and said that She cannot bestow it Herself. Some said she is only the personification of ‘Prakriti’ or the energy of nature. In the current age of Kali, Her status has also been reduced by some to that of a goddess who merely bestows material wealth!

Swāmi Deśika however brought out Her real nature- indicating that She is as much as the ‘Upāya’ or ‘means’ as the Lord is, that She is non-different from the Lord in every aspect, and that although She plays the role of a mediatrix being the mother of the entire universe, She is verily capable of granting ‘Moksha’ or final release. He upheld the traditional view that the Supreme Brahman is both Śrīe and Nārāyana together- dual yet one. Therefore this Ubhaya Vedântāchārya established the true nature of the ‘Divya Dampathi’ or the Divine Couple Śrīe and Nārāyana.

We have indicated earlier that Rāmānuja incarnated in the age of Kali to not only save innumerable souls ridden with the fear of samsāra, but verily to save the Supreme Brahman Himself from being divested of His true glory! It may be indicated here that Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika incarnated to not only re-establish the tenets of the doctrine of Rāmānuja, but verily to save the reigning consort of the Supreme Brahman- Goddess Lakshmi, from drowning into the mire of fallacious interpretations that concealed Her true glory. Swāmi Deśika revealed to us the true import of the statement 'Brahmani Śrinivāse' made earlier by Rāmānuja, and thereby re-established the true nature of the Divya Dampathi Śrīman Nārāyana! Such is the glory of our Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika!

Vêdānta Deśika composed a total of 121 Śree Granthams (or divine works). Of these, 32 are Stotrams or hymns in the praise of the Lord and His Consort; 8 are Kaavyas or poems of lyrical meter; 24 are Anushtaanaadi Shāstra or Manuals on the religious tenets of Śree Vaishnavism; 32 are of the category of Rahasya or Doctrinal Secrets; 24 are of the category of Tamil Prabandham and contain in total 454 stanzas; and one major gloss on the Bagavath Vishayam or the Tamil Vêdā.

Vêdānta Deśika had numerous disciples. His most eminent disciples were twelve in number out of whom the foremost disciples were son Varadāchārya and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar. Other prominent disciples included Vennai Kūtha Jīyar, Prabhakara Jīyar, Kunjapur Rāmānujāchārya, Kandādai Embār, Tirumalai Śrinivasāchārya, Tirumalai Nallan, Teertha Pillai, Kidāmbi Pillai, Komandur Pillai, and Toopil Appai.

Vêdānta Deśika lived on earth for a little over 100 years. His ascent to the abode of Vaikuntam was in the cyclic year of Sowmya, the Solar month of Karthika (or Vrischika-Karthigai) on a Purnima day when Krittika Nakshatra was in ascendance. The English calendar equivalent of this day is Wednesday, November 14, 1369 C.E.

श्रवणे मासि रोहिण्यां जातं वेङ्कटदेशिकात् ।

विश्वामित्रान्वयाब्धीन्दुम् वरदार्यमहं भजे ॥ २१

śravaṇē māsi rōhiṇyām jātaṁ vēṅkaṭadēśikāt .

viśvāmitrānvayāb dhīndum varadāryamaḥaṁ bhajē .. 21

Srāvane Māsi:	in the month of Shraavana
Rohinyām:	under the constellation of Rohini
Jātam:	born
Vēnkata Deśikāt:	as the son of Vēnkata Deśika
Vishvāmitra:	of Vishvāmitra
Anvāya:	descendents / race / lineage
Abdi:	ocean
Indum:	moon
Varadāryam:	the revered Varada
Aham:	I
Bhaje:	worship

***"I worship the revered Varada, the son of Vēdānta Deśika, who was born in the month of Shraavana, under the constellation of Rohini, as the moon for the ocean of the descendents of Vishvāmitra Gotra!"***

### Notes:

Kumāra Varadāchārya, the son of Vēdānta Deśika was born at Kānchipuram in the month of Shraavana or Āvani, under the constellation of Rohini, in the 4418 Kali year of Nala. The English equivalent for this date is Wednesday, 11 August, 1316 C.E. Vēdānta Deśika was by then 46 years of age and had spent 32 years of his married life childless. Lord Devarāja Perumāḷ of Kanchi incarnated as the illustrious son of Vēdānta Deśika, and therefore the child was given the name Varadārya!

Kumāra Varadāchārya, as he was called, learnt the various scriptures, the meanings of the Mantras and other works at the feet

of his father and Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika. It was Vêdānta Deśika who performed the Brahmopadesham for Varadārya.

यस्मादेव मया सर्वं शास्त्रमग्राहि नान्यतः ।

तस्मै वैङ्कटनाथाय मम नाथाय मङ्गलम् ॥

yasmādēva mayā sarvaṃ śāstramagrāhi nānyataḥ .

tasmai vaiṅkaṭanāthāya mama nāthāya maṅgaḷam ..

*"Benedictions unto my Lord, Śrī Vēṅkatanātha, the revered one from whom I imbibed the knowledge of all scriptures!"*

पित्रे ब्रह्मोपदेष्ट्रे मे गुरवे दैवताय च ।

pitrē brahmōpadēṣṭrē mē guravē daivatāya ca

*"Benedictions to my father who preformed the Brahmopadesha, who is also my preceptor, and verily my Lord!"*

-Vêdānta Deśika Mangalam 11, 12

Kumāra Varadārya was the recipient of the benevolent grace of Yatirāja at Tirunārāyanapuram. Rāmānuja had, through the agency of the priest, expressed his wish that the son of Vêdānta Deśika be the future upholder of his system. In order to comply with the wishes of Yatirāja, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar therefore chose to learn the Bhagavad Vishayam from his younger contemporary Varadārya! Along with Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, his co-disciple and friend Varadārya propogated the system of Rāmānuja and the teachings of Vêdānta Deśika.

Kumāra Varadārya was also called as 'Nainār Âchārya', i.e 'the preceptor who is smilar to his own father'! 'Nāyana' in Telugu means 'father'. This was in honor of the greatness of Varadārya who had a strong admiration for his father and preceptor. 'Naayana' in Telugu also means 'dear', used as a term of affection or

endearment for a young boy. In the Vada Desha, the followers of Vêdânta Desîka referred to young Kumāra Varadāchārya as 'Nāyana', out of affection. The appellation 'Nainār Āchārya' was continued to be used even when this young boy became a great Āchārya, along the lines of his own father!

Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar composed the following verse to honor him.

श्रीमान् लक्ष्मणयोगीन्द्रसिद्धान्तविजयध्वजम् ।

विश्वामित्रकुलोद्भूतम् वरदार्यमहं भजे ॥

śrīmān lakṣmaṇayōgīndrasiddhāntavijayadhvajam .

viśvāmitrakulōdbhūtam varadāryamaham bhajē ..

*"I worship Varadārya, the one born in the clan of Viśvāmitra, who is verily a banner depicting the glory of the doctrine of Lakshmana Yogi!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

The chief disciples of Varadārya were Prativādi Bhayankaram Annan, Kandādai Annan, Komandur Ācchan, Polipakkam Nayanār, Tirumalai Appar, Kidāmbi Appar, Nadādur Ālvān, Aanandappan, Kandādai Appan, Emberumānār Appan.

The six works of Kumāra Varadāchārya on his father Vêdânta Desîka are Mangalam, Prarthanāshtakam, Prapatti, Dinacharya, Vigraha Dhyānam and the Tamil work Pillai Andādi.

The eighteen other major works of Kumāra Varadāchārya are Sārārtha Sangraham, Abhaya Pardhāna Sāram, Virodhi Bhanjani, Prabandha Sāram, Tattva Traya Chulakam, Rahasya Traya Chulakam, Aahāra Niyamam, Nyāsa Tilaka Vyākhyānam, Saguna Brahma Samarthanam, Shankā Kathakam, Abheda Khandanam,

Avidyā Khandanam, Tyāga Shabdārtha Nirnayam, Tattva Mukta Kalāpa Shanti, Adhikarana Chintaamani, Mimaamsa Pāduka Paritrānam, Harina Sandesham, Kokila Sandesham. Apart from this, he composed numerous other works in Prākṛit.

He attained Parama Padam in the year Jaya, Panguni Maasam, Krishna Sapthami- Kali year of 4516, the English calendar equivalent being Sunday, March 3, 1415 C.E.

ब्रह्मतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रोक्तं दिव्यसूरिवरस्तुतिः ।

यः पठेत् प्रातः उत्थाय स भवेत् वैष्णवोत्तमः ॥ २२

brahmatantrasvatantṛōktaṃ divyasūrivarastutiḥ .

yaḥ paṭhēt prātaḥ utthāya sa bhavēt vaiṣṇavōttamaḥ .. 22

Brahmatantra Swatantra:	by Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar
Uktām:	uttered / spoken / said
Divya Sūri Vara:	of the most excellent Divya Sūris
Stutim:	praise / eulogy
Yah:	whosoever
Pateth:	recites / reads
Pratah:	daybreak / dawn / early in the morning
Utthāya:	having risen
Sa:	he / she / they
Bhavet:	will become / becomes
Vaisnavottamaha:	best / most elevated among Vaishnavās

*“Having risen from sleep at daybreak, whosoever recites this eulogy of the most excellent Divya Sūris, composed by Brahma Tantra Swatantra Jīyar, they surely become the best among Vaishnavās!”*

#### Notes:

The last two stanzas indicate the benefit of learning and reciting the Divya Sūri Stuti composed by Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar. This Stotra has been titled as “Divya Sūri Vara Stuti” by the author himself. It is the eulogy of the most exalted among the Divya Sūris, the ones who descended upon this earth as Āḷvārs and Āchāryas in an unbroken and immaculate traditional succession.

The best time of recitation of the Śloka is also indicated in this verse. The early hours of the morning are referred to as ‘Brahma Muhurtam’ by the Smṛiti texts. It is during this time, immediately upon rising from sleep, that one should meditate on the unbroken lineage of the preceptors with the verses of the Divya Sūri Stuti. The praise of the Āchārya Parampara helps us move closer to Paramātmā, the Supreme goal.

By recitation of this Śloka, how does one become the best among Vaishnavās? This is indicated in the following verse.

आचार्यानुग्रहात् सद्यः सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ।  
दृष्टे मनोरथान् प्राप्यत्वदृष्टे मोक्षमाप्नुयात् ॥ २३

ācāryānugrahāt sadyaḥ sarvapāpaiḥ pramucyate ..  
dr̥ṣṭē manōrathān prāpyatvadr̥ṣṭē mōkṣamāpnuyāt .. 23

Âchārya:	Âchārya
Anugrahaat:	by the blessing of / kindness of / compassion of / grace of
Sadyaha:	immediately
Sarva:	all
Paapaihi:	sins
Pramucchyate:	fall off / become loosened / detached
Driste:	manifested / perceived / seen
Manorathaan:	desires / wishes
Praapya:	acquirable / attainable
Tu:	and / verily
Adriste:	unseen / higher / transcendental
Moksham:	liberation / salvation
Aapnuyaāt:	obtained / attained

***"It is only the grace of an Âchārya that can bring  
about immediate detachment from all sins; fulfillment of material  
wishes and also attainment of the transcendental salvation!"***

#### Notes:

The key word in this end piece is 'Âchārya Anugrahāt'. The Anugraha or grace of the Âchārya is responsible for cutting loose the bonds of karma. It is also the one that causes the bestowal of all our desires in this world. Ultimately, it is only the grace of the Âchārya that also brings about the attainment of salvation; because even in case of performance of Prapatti or Sharanāgathi, it is the Âchārya who intervenes and makes it possible for us to reach the Supreme Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa! In this sense, the grace of an Âchārya takes care of the dual welfare- fulfillment of material wishes and importantly fulfillment of the ultimate goal of Moksha!

Vêdânta Deśika explains the glory of Âchārya Anugraha as follows,

एकयैव गुरोर्दृष्ट्या द्वाभ्यां वापि लभेत् यत् ।

न तत्तिसृभिरष्टाभिः सहस्रेणापि कस्यचित् ॥

ĕkayaiva gurordraṣṭyā dvābhyāṃ vāpi labhēt yat ..

na tattisṛbhiraṣṭābhiḥ sahasrēṇāpi kasyacit ..

*“What is attained by one graceful glance of an Âchārya or by his second glance, the same cannot be attained by three, eight, or a thousand glances whatsoever!”*

-Sankalpa Suryodaya, 2-62

An Âchārya's two glances are as follows; the first glance (or the first eye) is compassion or Dayā of the Âchārya. The second glance of the Âchārya is the act of beholding with his two physical eyes.

Either of these two glances bestows prosperity and auspiciousness upon the disciple! The graceful glances of the Âchārya is the one that causes the bestowal of all our desires in this world. Through the graceful glances of the Âchārya the disciple is also led to the ultimate spiritual good- Moksha.

The wealth of eternal prosperity and auspiciousness which can be bestowed by the glance of an Âchārya cannot be bestowed by the glances of the three eyes of God Shiva, glances of the eight eyes of the four-faced Brahma, or the glances of the one thousand eyes of Indra! Such is the glory of the grace of an Âchārya!

By the two graceful glances of the Âchārya, the disciple therefore attains 'Drishta Palam' (discernable fruits) - fulfillment of material wishes and 'Adrishta Palam' - that which cannot be perceived immediately, i.e. eternal prosperity- Moksha!

The other important word to note is 'Sadya' which means 'immediately', 'at-once', 'quickly'! The grace of an Âchārya is efficacious in immediate and prompt deliverance from all sins.

There is no delay whatsoever. Even as eternal darkness is annihilated within a moment by bright light, so too endless sins are annihilated instantly by the compassionate glance of an Âchârya!

By recitation of the Śloka- Divya Sūri Stuti, one can attain the grace of the entire Âchârya Parampara. By the supreme grace of the Âchârya Parampara, a Vaishnavā can reach the ultimate goal- Moksha. Therefore it is indicated in the previous stanza that one can become the best among Vaishnavās by the recitation of this Divya Sūri Stuti.

Such is the purport of this excellent Śloka, Divya Sūri Stuti, composed by Śri Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar!

**Śri Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmine Namaha //**

इति ब्रह्मतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रयोगीन्द्रकृतं दिव्यसूरि स्त्रोत्रं संपूर्णम् ॥

iti brahmatantraswatantrayōgīndrakṛtaṃ

divyasūri strōtraṃ sampūrṇam .

*Here ends the Divya Sūri Stotra composed by  
Śri Brahmatantra Swatantra Yogi!*

कवितार्किकसिंहायकल्याणगुणशालिने ।

श्रीमते वैङ्कटेशाय वेदान्तगुरवे नमः ॥

kavitārkikasimhāyakalyāṇaguṇaśālinē .

śrīmatē vaiṅkaṭeśāya vēdāntaguravē namaḥ ..

*"I worship Vēdānta Deśika, the lion among poets  
and logicians, the one endowed with auspicious qualities,  
who was verily Lord Vēnkatesha Himself!"*

देशिकन् तिरुवडिगळे शरणम् ॥

dēśikan tiruvaḍigaḷē śaraṇam ..

*"We surrender at the lotus feet of Vēdānta Deśika!"*

## Vêdānta Deśika Taniyans

composed by Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar

*Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmine Namaha //*

### Verse 1:

नमः पदमिदं भूयात् तस्मै वेङ्कटसूरये ।

यद्वागमृतसेकेन सञ्जीवितं इदं जगत् ॥

namaḥ padamidaṁ bhūyāt tasmai vēṅkaṭasūrayē .

yadvāgamṛtasēkēna sañjīvitam idaṁ jagat ..

*"I bow again and again to the feet of this Vēṅkata Sūri, the profuse drizzle of whose nectarine speech enlivened this mortal world!"*

Namaha:	I bow
Padam:	to the feet
Idam:	this
Bhuyat:	again and again
Tasmai:	to him
Vēṅkatasuraye:	Vēṅkata Sūri, Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika
Yad:	whose
Vaak:	voice, or nectarine speech, words, teachings
Amruta:	nectarine
Sekena:	a drop of; also can be taken as the profuse drizzle of, the effusion of
Sanjeevitam:	enlivened
Idam:	this
Jagat:	mortal world

### Notes:

This Taniyan composed by Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar was one of the earliest verses composed on Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika. The laudatory verse was composed by Jīyar prior to his seeking refuge at the feet of Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika. This Taniyan was also recited by the Jīyar at the time of engaging in the study and teaching

of the Śrī Bhāṣya. It is said in the scriptures that even the Gods themselves cannot make recompense to one who imparts the teaching of the true nature of the Supreme Lord. The scripture therefore enjoins that a disciple always render due praise of his Guru. The Jīyar's act of bringing his revered Guru to light, at the time of engaging in the study, is therefore the result of overflowing gratitude and devotion to him.

Namaha Padamidam Bhuyaat Tasmai Vēnkatasuraye; I bow again and again to the feet of this Vēnkata Sūri;

Yadvaag Amruta Sekena: the flow of whose nectarine speech; Vaak means words, speech; in this case teachings; the words of Vēdānta Deśika were nectarine owing to the following reasons-

Lord Hayagreeva Himself had appeared in front of Deśika and blessed him with His nectarine saliva. The words of Vēdānta Deśika therefore carried forth this divine nectar of Lord Hayagreeva.

Lord Hayagreeva Himself had occupied the tongue tip of Vēdānta Deśika, as if it were His throne.

Third, the same truths that Lord Hayagreeva wrote in Deśika's heart (in the form of Deśika's Âchārya) were then expounded by the latter in the form of divine words and teachings

The word Sekena has two meanings-

it can mean 'flow of, or the pouring forth of, or sprinkling of', referring to the lucid teachings of Vēdānta Deśika and his numerous works. The nectar of the saliva of Lord Hayagreeva was then sprinkled forth by Vēdānta Deśika in the form drops of words, i.e the divine nectar assumed the form of a flow of nectarine teachings

Sekena also can mean 'a drop' of anything, here 'a drop' of Deśika's nectarine teachings; although Vēdānta Deśika composed numerous works, understanding even one of them is sufficient to

confer the ultimate good- i.e. moksha; therefore even one drop of his nectarine teachings suffices. Such is the meaning

Sanjeevitam Idam Jagat: to enliven this mortal world

Jagat means the world, earth; which has the inherent quality of being mortal, i.e. subject to the endless cycle of birth, death and re-birth (Samsāra or existence) and to creation and destruction

The nectarine teachings of Vêdānta Deśika have the ability to enliven the mortal world; here enliven means not to merely make alive (Jeevitam), rather it means to help transgress and overcome the endless cycle of existence;

A drop of the nectarine teachings of Swāmi Deśika is sufficient to confer Moksha. We bow unto the feet of this Vênkata Sūri. Such is the purport!

Verse 2:

भगवन्तमिवानन्तकल्याणगुणसागरं ।

वेदान्तदेशिकं नौमि वेङ्कटेशगुरुत्तमम् ॥

bhagavantamivānantakalyāṇaguṇasāgaraṃ .

vêdāntadêśikaṃ naumi vênkaṭêśagurūtṭamam ..

*"I worship Vêdānta Deśika, the most excellent preceptor named Vênkatesha, who is an ocean of numerous auspicious qualities, verily like the Lord Himself!"*

Bhagavantam:	Bhagavān, the Supreme Lord
Iva:	like / as it were / in the same manner
Ananta:	innumerable
Kalyāna:	auspicious
Guna:	qualities
Sāgaram:	ocean of
Vêdānta Deśikam:	Vêdānta Deśika
Naumi:	I salute, I worship
Vênkatesha:	Vênkatesha
Guruttāmam:	the most excellent Guru

**Notes:**

This Taniyan was composed by Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar at the time of Avatāra Samāp̥thi, or the ascent of Vêdānta Deśika to Parama Padam!

Bhagavantam Iva: verily like Bhagavān, the Supreme Lord  
Vêdānta teaches that a disciple should have as much devotion to the Guru as to the Lord Himself! For Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, Vêdānta Deśika was verily the Supreme Lord.

The term 'Bhagavantam Iva' has also been employed to convey the Avatāra Rahasya of Vêdānta Deśika. Note the simultaneous mention of two appellations 'Vêdānta Deśika' and 'Vênkatesha Guru'. While 'Vêdānta Deśika' signifies the bestowal of the 'Vedāntāchārya Pada' or the title of Ubhaya Vedāntāchārya; the term Vênkatesha Guru signifies the Avatāra of Lord Vênkatêshwara as Vêdānta Deśika. Therefore, in this regard as well, Deśika is verily Bhagavān- the Supreme Lord.

Ananta Kalyāna Guna Sāgaram: an ocean of innumerable auspicious qualities;

Vêdānta Deśika was endowed with numerous divine qualities- purity, wisdom, foresightedness, erudition, scholarliness, equanimity, dispassion, fortitude, peacefulness, enlightenment, non-injury, compassion, complete freedom from pride or arrogance, humility, courage, the ability to endure evilness, conviction to stand up for the truth, unmatched devotion to the Supreme Person and above all, total adoration for Âchārya Rāmānuja! These were only a few of the gracious qualities belonging to Thooppul Vênkatanātha! The word Ananta also indicates that Vêdānta Deśika possessed such auspicious qualities eternally.

The Lord too is the repository of innumerable auspicious qualities. And in this regard also, Deśika is verily Bhagavān; Bhagavantam Iva!

Another aspect is to be noted. Since Lord Śrīman Nārāyana now bestowed His own appellation of ‘Vedāntāchārya’ on Vêdānta Deśika; in this regard also Deśika is verily Bhagavān; Bhagavantam Iva!

Naumi Vênkatesha Guruttamam; I worship Vênkatesha, the Uttama Guru or most excellent preceptor

Verse 3:

रामानुजदयापात्रं ज्ञानवैराग्यभूषणम् ।  
 श्रीमद्वेङ्कटनाथार्यं वन्दे वेदान्तदेशिकम् ॥  
 rāmānujadayaāpātram jñānavairāgyabhūṣaṇam .  
 śrīmadvēṅkaṭanāthāryam vandē vēdāntadēśikam ..

*“I worship Śrī Vēṅkatanātha, also called Vêdānta Deśika, the one embellished with knowledge and dispassion as ornaments, and the one who was the recipient of the grace of Rāmānuja!”*

Rāmānuja:	Rāmānuja
Dayaa:	the grace of, compassion of
Paatram:	one worth of, one fit for, one abounding in, the object of
Gnana:	knowledge
Vairaagya:	dispassion
Bushanam:	as ornaments, as embellishments, or decorated with, adorned with
Śrīmad Vēṅkata Nāthāryam:	the revered Śrī Vēṅkatanātha
Vande:	I worship, I praise, I adore
Vêdānta Deśikam:	Vêdānta Deśika

Notes:

This exalted verse composed by Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar is replete with the most profound meanings and doctrinal truths! These meanings are best understood by learning from a qualified teacher who will impart the instruction based on the teachings of

Poorvāchāryas (previous preceptors). However, in order to understand some glorious aspects of this divine verse, the following explanation may be reviewed.

Tiru Avatāram of the Rāmānuja Dayāpātram Taniyan:

The first verse of the Śloka Trayam of Pannirāyirappadi gives the details of date and time of the composition of the Rāmānuja Dayāpātram Taniyan. This calculates to Tuesday, August 18, 1338 C.E. (See earlier section)

*"In the Kali year of four thousand - four hundred - forty  
at the Yadu hill, under the stellar constellation  
of Hasta, in the Bahudhānya year, the month of  
Nabha, under the combination of shukla paksha dviteeya"*

The circumstance pertaining to its composition and rendering was that Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar was about to begin learning the Tiruvaimoḷi of Nammālvār, according to the Bhagavad Vishayam-i.e. Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān's 'Tiruārāyirappadi' Vyākhyānam, along with the elaborate gloss of Deśika's 'Eḷupathu Nālāyirappadi' or 'Seventy four thousand', at the feet of Śrī Kumāra Varadāchārya.

The 'Bahudhānya Vatsara' is important for Śree Vaishnavās for many reasons. It is in the cyclic year of Bahudhānya of the 11<sup>th</sup> century C.E. that Rāmānuja had set foot on the Yadugiri hill in search of Tiruman. It was in the month of Panguni of the Bahudhānya Vatsara of Kali 4200 (1099 C.E.) that Lord TiruNārāyana was found and consecrated by Rāmānuja! He named the place Tirunārāyanapuram. Following this event, Rāmānuja also undertook the journey to the North and eventually installed, in the temple of Tirunārāyanapuram, the Utsava Vighraha of Rāmapriya along with His two consorts.

Two centuries and 39 years later (i.e. after four 60 year cycles), in the same cyclic year of Bahudhānya, the glorious verse ‘Rāmānuja Dayāpātram’ took birth, verily at this Yadugiri hill or Tirunārāyanapuram!

Why did Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar compose this verse?

In reality, it was the overflowing compassion of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa and the entire Âḷvār Âchārya Guruparampara that was bestowed upon Vêdānta Deśika in the form of this laudatory verse! The first verse of the Śloka Trayam of Pannirāyirappadi explains this (see earlier section):

*“Due to the divine grace of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa, Satakopa, Yatisha and other Âchāryas; the renowned benedictory verse beginning with the word ‘Rāmānuja’ took birth to illuminate the greatness of Vêdānta Deśika!”*

Vêdānta Deśika had been blessed with the grace and appreciation of entire lineage of Poorvāchāryas (previous preceptors). The noble Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika, out of affection for his foremost and deserving disciple, lit the imperishable lamp of spiritual tradition in Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and revealed to him the path of the Upanishads, the dual Vêdānta, the meaning of the Mantras, along with the glory of the preceding lineage of Gurus who preserved this ancient tradition. Thus the overflowing compassion of the entire Âḷvār Âchārya Guruparampara chose the foremost disciple of Deśika to manifest itself in the form of a divine verse. The Taniyan or laudatory verse that ensued from the core of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar’s heart therefore took shape with the following sentiments:

- 1) The staunch devotion and a sense of great indebtedness that Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar had towards his own Guru became manifest through this verse

- 2) The grace and benediction of entire lineage of Poorvāchāryas upon Vêdānta Deśika became manifest through this verse
- 3) In recounting the praise of his Âchārya Deśika, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar also worshipped the entire Guruparampara through this verse!

It is for this reason that Lord Ranganātha Himself exclaimed that the recitation of 'Rāmānuja Dayāpātram' was akin to '*Samputa Gayathri*'\* when it was recited (at the beginning and at the end of the recitation of the Divya Prabandham) along with the other verses that praised the Guruparampara! Dviteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar also remarks in the Śloka Trayam of Pannirāyirappadi that the verse 'Rāmānuja Dayāpātram' is '*Padyottamam*' i.e. the most elevated verse!

Since the verse '*Rāmānuja Dayā Pātram*' had been composed on the occasion of Bhagavad Vishayam Kālakshepam, and moreover since it revealed the glory of the divine grace of Poorvāchāryas, Vêdānta Deśika himself suggested the rendering of the verse prior to commencing studies on the Divya Prabandhās, Bhagavad Vishayam and other such works!

### **Rāmānuja Dayāpātram:**

'Rāmānuja Dayāpātram' literally means 'one who has received the abounding grace of Rāmānuja', and refers to Swami Vêdānta Deśika who was the receptacle of that grace.

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\*Samputa means a case or casket. 'Samputikarana' literally means to furnish with a lid or cover; with respect to a 'mantra' or verse, it means providing an 'enclosure' at the beginning and the end. When a verse is constituted along with the appropriate Samputikarana, its inherent potency is enhanced manifold.

In the most direct connotation, the word 'Rāmānuja' denotes Âtreya Rāmānuja, the Âchārya of Vêdānta Deśika. Âtreya Rāmānuja (Appullār) taught Deśika the quintessential doctrinal truths that were passed down to him through established spiritual tradition. Deśika himself refers to this tradition as 'Yatīśvara Mahānasa Sampradāyam' or 'the tradition of the cook of Yatīśvara', i.e. the 'Spiritual Kitchen of Rāmānuja'. In doing so, he refers to Kidāmbi Âcchan, who was the recipient of the grace of Yatirāja; and the traditional succession of Âchārya's in this lineage leading upto Âtreya Rāmānuja, the direct Âchārya of Deśika. The abounding grace of Yatirāja Rāmānuja came to Deśika through Âtreya Rāmānuja. In this regard therefore, Vêdānta Deśika is 'Rāmānuja Dayāpātram'!

Being a recipient of the grace of Yatirāja through unbroken tradition, Swami Deśika also became assured of the protection of Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa! This is another important aspect conveyed by the term 'Rāmānuja Dayāpātram'! Śrī Deśika himself refers to this in the 22<sup>nd</sup> verse of Nyāsa Tilakam.

उक्त्या धनंजयविभीषणलक्ष्यया ते  
प्रत्याय्य लक्ष्मणमुनेर्भवता वितीर्णम् ।  
श्रुत्वा वरं तदनुबन्धमदावलिप्ते  
नित्यं प्रसीद भगवन् मयि रङ्गनाथ ॥

uktyā dhanañjayavibhīṣaṇalakṣyayā tē  
pratyāyya lakṣmaṇamunērbhavatā vitīrṇam .  
śrutvā varam tadanubandha madāvaliptē  
nityam prasīda bhagavan mayi raṅganātha ..

*"O Lord Ranganātha! I have heard the blessing You bestowed to  
Lakshmana Muni, assuring him by referring to Your own words  
that were earlier addressed to Arjuna and Vibheeshana!  
You must always extend Your protective grace towards me,  
who am proud of my connection with Rāmānuja!"*

Swāmi Deśika therefore proudly refers to his ‘Anubandham’ with Âchārya Rāmānuja. In this sense also he is ‘Rāmānuja Dayāpātram’!

Further, the word Rāmānuja can be understood as follows:

- 1) The word Rāma indicates Lord Śrīman Nārāyana. The word ‘Rāmānuja’ also Śrīman Nārāyana as Lord Krishna. The word ‘Anuja’ means younger. The one younger to Rāma (Balarāma), i.e. Lord Krishna, taught the Bhagavad Gita and re-established the Tattva (truth) and Hita (means to attain the truth). As Yadu Kula Rāmānuja, i.e. as Krishna, the Supreme Lord reassured his devotee Arjuna about the efficacy of Sharanāgati through the Charama Śloka.
- 2) The word Ramā denotes Lakshmi. In this sense, the word Rāma indicates Vishwaksena who comes after Goddess Lakshmi in the Guruparampara. ‘Rāmānuja’ then denotes Nammālvār, who comes after Vishwaksena in the Guruparampara. Since he is the Nayaka-mani or central gem representing all Âlvārs, the word Rāmānuja denotes all the twelve Âlvārs.
- 3) The word ‘Rāmānuja’ (as indicated earlier) denotes Sesha Amsa Rāmānuja, i.e. Yatipati Rāmānuja. This Nayaka-mani called ‘Rāmānuja’ is the brilliant ornament that illumines all the Âchāryas who came before and after him, and therefore represents the entire lineage of Âchāryas.

The word Rāmānuja therefore connotes the entire Guruparampara.

The term ‘Rāmānuja Dayāpātram’ indicates that Vêdānta Deśika was the receptacle of the divine grace of the entire Guruparampara beginning with Śrīman Nārāyana, the Âlvārs and Âchāryas! Also, out of that abounding grace of the entire Guruparampara, the verse ‘Rāmānuja Dayāpātram’ ensued out of the lotus mouth of

Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar in the form of a Taniyan. This is the beauty of the verse Rāmānuja Dayāpātram! It is for this reason that Dviteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar says (see previous section on Pannirāyirappadi verses):

*"Due to the divine grace of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa, Satakopa, Yatisha and other Āchāryas; the renowned benedictory verse beginning with the word 'Rāmānuja' took birth to illumine the greatness of Vēdānta Deśika!"*

Since the term 'Rāmānuja' connotes the entire Guruparampara, in recounting the praise of his Āchārya Deśika, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar also worships the entire Guruparampara through this verse!

### ***Jnāna Vairāgya Bhushanam:***

Refers to one who has knowledge 'Jnāna' and dispassion 'Vairāgya' as ornaments 'Bhushanam'; Śrī Vēdānta Deśika was adorned with Jnāna and Vairāgya as embellishments. In fact, being the incarnation of the divine bell of Lord Vēṅkatēshwara, he was 'Samastha Kalyāṇa Guna Gana Bhushana', i.e. one adorned with the entirety of auspicious qualities. Representing the numerous auspicious qualities he possessed, Jnāna and Vairāgya stood out as the most important embellishments. The fact that Śrī Deśika was inherently blessed with Jnāna is seen from several instances during his divine life:

- 1) Even as a young child of five years, when Deśika was taken to the Kālakshepam of the great Vātsya Varadaguru, he was easily able to indicate the exact 'Śrī Bhāshya Upanyāsa Vākya' that was spoken by Nadādur Ammāl prior to stopping his Kālakshepam!
- 2) By the age of twenty years, he had achieved mastery over all subjects and completed his education!
- 3) By the time he wrote Sankalpa Suryodaya, he had performed Śrī Bhāshya Pravachanam about 30 times!

- 4) When Krishna Mishra composed a work called 'Prabodha Chandrodaya', Vêdânta Deśika composed the 'Sankalpa Suryodaya' in the time span of a single night!
- 5) He became the object of praise of Dindima Kavi, having composed excellent works of the nature of 'Yadavābhyudayam' and 'Hamsa Sandesham'!
- 6) Deśika also composed a magnificent work called the Pāduka Sahasram, comprising of 1008 beautiful verses, within the time span of a single night!
- 7) He was bestowed the title of 'Sarvatantra Swatantra' by none other than Goddess Ranganāyaki Tāyār!

These are only a few among numerous other examples that showed the Jnāna Guna Vishêsha of Swāmi Vêdânta Deśika! Vairāgya was the other important embellishment of our Swāmi Deśika! Vairāgya means dispassion towards all worldly desires. Vêdânta Deśika considered only the Supreme Lord as his wealth. Few important events have to be recounted in this regard;

- 1) On once occasion, Deśika's friend Vidyāranya sent the former an invitation to adorn the royal court of the King as the royal Guru. Deśika's profound sense of detachment for worldly desires and resentment for a life of material comforts was evident in his reply sent in the form of five verses of the Vairagya Panchakam!

नास्ति पित्रार्जितं किञ्चिन्न मया किञ्चिदार्जितम् ।

अस्ति मे हस्तिशैलाग्रे वस्तु पैतामहं धनम् ॥

nāsti pitrārjitaṁ kiñcinna mayā kiñcidārjitaṁ .

asti mē hastīśailāgrē vastu paitāmahaṁ dhanam ..

*"There is no wealth that I have earned, nor is there any acquired from my father. However, atop the Hastigiri hill there exists my ancestral treasure!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Swāmi Deśika was referring to Lord Varadarāja who manifested Himself upon the Hastigiri hill during the Ashvamedha sacrifice performed by Chaturmukha Brahma! Deśika refused to accept any material wealth in exchange for the precious wealth of being able to behold and serve his beloved Lord!

- 2) Certain jealous people once instigated a Brahmin, who was seeking monetary help for his marriage, to approach Deśika for wealth. The Brahmin fell at the feet of Swāmi Deśika seeking his help. Vēdānta Deśika then composed the Śree Stuti, pleading with Pirātti. At that moment, the Supremely compassionate mother of the three worlds, Goddess Śree Devi, bestowed the required wealth in the form of a shower of gold coins! Deśika promptly handed over the entire wealth to the Brahmin for the purpose of his wedding.
- 3) On another occasion, Deśika's wife, Tirumangaiyār, noticed some gold coins in the rice that was procured by Deśika through alms, or 'Unchavrtti'. A householder had intentionally mixed a few gold coins with the rice grains with an intention of helping Deśika. Tirumangaiyār promptly reported the finding to Deśika who advised her to throw it out saying that they were worms. She did accordingly! Such were the noble qualities of this divine couple!
- 4) Swāmi Deśika was also an epitome of humility. Two episodes in his life require special mention with regard to this. Certain envious individuals once hung a garland of

footwear on the upper threshold of the door of his house. Next morning, when Deśika opened the door, he saw the garland of footwear. Un-perturbed, Deśika said:

कर्मावलम्बकाः केचित् ज्ञानावलम्बकाः ।

वयं तु हरिभक्तानां पादरक्षावलम्बकाः ॥

karmāvalambakāḥ kēcit jñānāvalambakāḥ .  
vayaṁ tu haribhaktānāṁ pādarakṣāvalambakāḥ ..

*"Some depend upon the path of Karma, and some depend upon the path of Jnāna for liberation. Whereas, we depend simply upon the footwear of the devotees of Lord Hari!"*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

On yet another occasion while Swāmi Deśika was residing in Srirangam, certain envious disciples of the vaishnava scholar Alaghiya Manavāla Perumāḷ Nayanār questioned Deśika as to how he deserved the appellation of '*Kavitārkika Simhar*'. With utter humility, Deśika replied that he had no desire to acquire any titles or accolades. Swāmi Deśika did not wish to indulge in any confrontation, that too with another Vaishnava.

Despite this, the disciples of the other scholar insisted that Deśika accept the challenge of composing a poem on a common topic. Owing to these circumstances, Swāmi Deśika became forced to accept the challenge of composing a poem overnight. By the grace of Lord Ranganātha, Deśika composed one thousand verses in praise of the sandals of the Lord- Pādukāśahasra! While Swami Deśika was able to compose one thousand beautiful verses that night, the other scholar could manage only three hundred verses. The host of Śri Vaishnavas who gathered to witness the results next morning unanimously agreed upon the verdict that Vêdānta

Deśika was indeed the befitting recipient of the title ‘*Kavitārkika Simhar*’!

Instead of claiming glory, Swāmi Deśika submitted with utter humility by saying,

सूते सूकरयुवतिः सुतशतम् अति दुर्भगम् झटिति ।  
करिणी चिराय सूते सकलमहीपाललालितम् कलभम् ॥

sūtē sūkarayuvatiḥ sutaśatam ati durbhagam jhaṭiti .  
kariṇī cirāya sūtē sakalamahīpālālālitam kalabham ..

*“A she-pig produces a hundred young ones rather soon; however a she-elephant produces a young calf after a long time and only that becomes fondled by all the great Kings!”*

- Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam

Swāmi implied that although he himself managed to compose the one thousand verses, the work composed by his opponent was indeed the elephant that gets honored by the Kings! Such a treasure-house of noble qualities was our Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika!

Swāmi Deśika himself indicates this incident in the following sloka:

स्वतमितिहरिदत्तं यामुनस्तोत्रवृत्त्या  
व्यवृणत निगमान्ताचार्यकं वेङ्कटेशः ।  
अगणि सदसि सद्भिर्भ्यस्समस्या सहस्री  
कविकथक मृगेन्द्रस्सर्वतन्त्र स्वतन्त्रः ॥  
svatamitiharidattam yāmunastōtravṛtṭyā  
vyavṛṇata nigamāntācāryakam vēṅkaṭēśaḥ  
agaṇi sadasi sadbhiryassamasyā sahasrī  
kavikathaka mṛgēndrassarvatantra svatantraḥ

*“This gloss on Yāmuna’s Stotraratna has been composed by Vēnkatesha Kavi, to whom Lord Hari bestowed His own title of ‘Vēdāntācharya’ and also that of ‘Sarva Tantra Swatantra’, and who for having composed a thousand verses within a short time period was considered to indeed be a ‘lion for poets and logicians’ by the assemblage of wise men!”*

- Vēdānta Deśika Stotraratna Bhāshyam, concluding verse

The title ‘Kavitārkika Simha’ had been bestowed upon Swāmi Deśika earlier by the Śrī Vaishnavas at Śrīrangam. On two previous occasions, Vēdānta Deśika countered the challenges of Krishna Mishra and Dindima Kavi, proving to be a worthy recipient of this honor. On this occasion, he overcame a challenge for the third time. By composing one thousand verses within the short span of one night, he proved yet again that he was indeed a lion for the elephant like poets and logicians. Indicating this fact, Swāmi says ‘Sadasi Sadbihi Samasya Sahasri’, ‘one who composed a thousand verses within a short period and was honored in the assembly of the wise vaishnavas’!

Note also that in this beautiful verse, Swāmi indicates several other important facts about himself. ‘Vēnkatesha’ was the name given to him by his parents and maternal uncle- Appillār. Therefore Swāmi calls himself as Vēnkatesha Kavi, or the poet named ‘Vēnkatesha’!

The appellations ‘Sarva Tantra Swatantra’ and ‘Vēdāntācharya’ were bestowed upon Swāmi Deśika by Goddess Ranganāyaki Tāyār and Lord Ranganātha respectively. Moreover, the name ‘Vēdāntācharya’ is a unique appellation of Lord Vishnu Himself. Therefore,

indicating all these aspects Swāmi Deśika says ‘Svatam Iti Hari Dattam’ – ‘Lord Hari bestowed His own name’!

Since he was an epitome of such auspicious qualities, it is not an exaggeration to say that Swāmi Deśika himself became an embellishment for the qualities of Jnāna and Vairāgya, rather than the other way round!

सम्भावना यस्य हि कालकूटः सभा भुजङ्गी कुणपं तरुण्यः ।

स्याद्रौरवं राजगृहं स जीयात् चिरं गुरुर्वेङ्कटनाथनामा ।।

sambhāvanā yasya hi kālakūṭaḥ sabhā bhujaṅgī kuṇapaṁ taruṇyaḥ.  
syādrauravaṁ rājagṛhaṁ sa jīyāt ciraṁ gururvēṅkaṭanāthanāmā ..

*“Eternal glory to that Guru named Venkatanātha  
who considered praise as poison, vain disputants  
as dangerous serpents, a woman’s attractive body as a  
smelly corpse, and a king’s palace as an infernal region!”*

- Śrī Vêdānta Deśika Dinacharya, 2

***Srimad Vêkatanāthāryam Vande Vêdānta Deśikam:***

The simultaneous mention of two appellations ‘Vêkatanātha’ and ‘Vêdānta Deśika’ serves a specific purpose. The term Vêkatanātha reveals the Avatāra Rahasya of Swāmi Deśika. He was an incarnation of Lord Vēṅkatēshwara!

The term ‘Vêdānta Deśika’ signifies the bestowal of the ‘Vedāntāchārya Pada’ or the title of Ubhaya Vedāntāchārya to him by Lord Ranganātha!

***The essence of Rahasya Traya in the verse ‘Rāmānuja Dayā Pātram’:***

The quintessential meaning of the Tirumantram, Dvaya Mantram and Charama Sloka are also contained within the divine verse ‘Rāmānuja Dayā Pātram’. The explanation of these facts is beyond the scope of this work, and moreover is to be correctly obtained only at the feet of a qualified Âchārya. However, it will suffice to say here that this divine treasure-gem among the verses, beginning with ‘Rāmānuja Dayā Pātram’, is permeated with the Tattva, Hita, Purushārtha; with the nectarine gist of the Rahasya Traya Mantras; with the glory of Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika manifesting as the overflying compassion of the Guruparampara; and with the glory of the entire Âchārya Parampara itself starting with the divine couple Śrīman Nārāyana! Such is the divinity of this most extraordinary verse composed by Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar!

It is for this reason that the recitation of the most exalted verse was ordered as a divine mandate by Lord Ranganātha Himself! (see previous section on Pannirāyirappadi verses)

*“Following this, in all the Divya Deshas on the earth and in individual homes of the Śree Vaishnavaas, the best among verses (Rāmānuja Dayāpātram) was uttered by the wise and learned people, prior to the commencement of the Divya Prabandha Pravachanam, in accordance with the divine mandate of Śrī Ranganātha! Being pleased by this, the Lord of Śree who grants us our desired wishes remains eternally delighted!”*

Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmine Namaha /

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This explanation of the quintessential import of the Rāmānuja Dayāpātram Taniyan is based on the gloss composed by Śrī Vātsya Ahobilāchāryar Swāmi, the direct disciple of Śrī Jnanābdhi Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi. Source: Tiruvaimoļi, Published by Srirangam, Srimad Andavan Ashramam; 1991. Readers may kindly refer to the original source, and seek instruction through a Guru for accurate interpretation.

# Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar Taniyans

*Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmine Namaha //*

## Taniyan 1

हस्तीशं लोकविख्यातं कौण्डिन्यां विदुषां वरम् ।

रामानुजार्य सिद्धान्तस्थापनाचार्यमाश्रये ॥

hastīśaṃ lōkavikhyātaṃ kauṇḍinyāṃ viduṣāṃ varam .

rāmānujārya siddhāntasthāpanācāryamāśrayē ..

*"I seek refuge in the well known Śrī Hastīshar of the  
Koundinya Gotra, the best among wise men, the Āchārya  
who established the doctrine of Rāmānuja!"*

**Hastīsham-** Veeravalli Hastīshar;

the name of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar in his purvashramam. He was also called as Perarulāla Aiyar, named after Lord Varadarāja.

**Lokavikhyātam-** the famous, well known in this world;

in the world of wise men who have the innate desire to accept the pure philosophy of Rāmānuja, Veeravalli Hastīshar has to be well known, since he plays a central role in the Guruparampara.

**Koundinyām-** in the Gotra of Koundinya Rishi

**Vidushām Varam-** the best among wise men

**Rāmānuja Siddhānta Sthāpanāchārya-** 'the Āchārya who established the doctrine of Rāmānuja';

Three important aspects have to be highlighted here. Lord Varadarāja Himself ordained that the disciple by the name of Brahmatantra Swatantra be given the necessary facilities to propagate the Rāmānuja Darshanam, and that all the followers of Rāmānuja accept and support this disciplinic succession in the propagation of Rāmānuja Siddhāntam.

Secondly, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar is the Âchārya who plays a pivotal role and is central to all the three traditional successions – Rahasya Parampara, Śri Bhāshya Parampara and the Bhagavad Vishaya Parampara.

Third, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar is the principal Âchārya for all the Matams that have adhered to the Deśika Sampradāyam of Rāmānuja Darshanam- the Parakāla Swāmi Matam, Ahobila Matam, Andavan Ashramam and all Svayam Âchārya traditions that have adhered to Swāmi Deśika's teachings. Moreover, he was also the preceptor of the Śri Bhāshya to Kidāmbi Nayanār, who then taught the Bhāshya to Śri Manavāla Māmuni.

Therefore the term 'Rāmānuja Siddhānta Sthapanāchārya' is apt for this great Âchārya. In fact, Śri Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar has been deservingly entitled as Ubhaya Vêdānta Âchārya, Vêdā Maarga Prathistapanāchārya, Bhagavad Rāmānuja Siddhānta Sthapanāchārya!

**Aashraye- I surrender**

**Taniyan 2**

पर्यायभाष्यकाराय प्रणतार्तिं विधून्वते ।

ब्रह्मतन्त्रस्वतन्त्राय द्वितीयब्रह्मणे नमः ॥

pariyāyabhāṣyakārāya praṇatārtim vidhūnvatē .

brahmatantrasvatantrāya dvitīyabrahmaṇē namaḥ ..

*"I bow unto Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, who is verily like Bhāshyakāra, who is a second Brahman and who is the remover of obstacles of those who seek protection!"*

**Paryāya Bhāshyakārāya-** means ‘the one who is like Bhāshyakāra reappeared’;

Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar was given the title ‘Brahmatantra Swatantra’ because of his mastery over the Brahma Sutras. On one occasion, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar became victorious over a heretic who came to defile the doctrine of Rāmānuja at Kānchipuram. The way in which the Jīyar used his mastery over the Brahma Sutra Bhāshya of Rāmānuja to refute the opponents’ claims, made it seem as though Rāmānuja himself had descended to uphold his doctrine. For, none other than Rāmānuja could have handled the interpretations of the Brahma Sutras to such perfection! Pleased with this feat, Vêdānta Deśika turned to his beloved disciple Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and said- ‘You are verily like Bhāshyakāra’.

Apart from his mastery over the Vêdānta, there are other reasons for which Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar can be considered as a ‘second Bhāshyakāra’.

- 1) Like Rāmānuja, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar accepted the Sannyāsa at the Sannidhi of Lord Varadarāja at Kānchipuram. In the succession of Âchāryas leading to Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, since he was the first Sannyāsin after Rāmānuja to have ascended the ‘Âchārya Peetam’ or the ‘Preceptorial royal-seat’ as the ‘Sampradāya Pravartaka’, he is aptly referred to as ‘Paryāya Bhāshyakāra’ or ‘second Bhāshyakāra’.
- 2) While Rāmānuja received the ‘six instructions’ from Lord Varadarāja Perumāl through Kanchipurna, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar received from the same Lord Varadarāja a divine mandate or the ‘seventh instruction’ that bestowed upon him the ‘Âchārya Peetam’. This was communicated through the agency of the priest. Therefore Lord Varada Himself bestowed upon Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar the position akin to that of ‘Bhāshyakāra’.

The term Paryāya Bhāshyakāra also indicates that Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar was verily like an embodiment of Śrī Rāmānujācharya!

**Brahmatantra Swatantrāya-** ‘to the one who is known as Brahmatantra Swatantra’;

It was actually Lord Varadarāja Himself who gave the title Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar to the disciple of Vēdānta Deśika. The seventh instruction of Varadarāja engraved as an inscription on the walls of the Kānchipuram temple carries the information *“Brahma-Tantra-Swatantra Jīyan Enru Naam Per-kudduta”* meaning, the appellation ‘Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar’ was bestowed upon Perarulāla Jīyar by Lord Varadarāja and His consort Perundevi Tāyār. It was then, through Vēdānta Deśika, that this title became bestowed upon Perarulāla Jīyar as an honor. On the occasion of his victory over an opponent who challenged him at Perumāl Koil, Perarulāla Jīyar went into the Sanctum of Lord Varada at Perumāl Koil. The Lord referred to the Jīyar as ‘Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar’ and bestowed His blessings through the agency of the priest. Vēdānta Deśika being prompted by this benediction of Lord Varada, proudly affixed upon his disciple the title of ‘Brahmatantra Swatantra’ (meaning, ‘an authority on Vēdānta’)! Just as our Rāmānuja was given the title of ‘Yatirāja’ by Lord Varada, our Perarulāla Jīyar was given the title ‘Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar’ by that Lord Varada Himself! In this regard also, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar is a ‘second Bhāshyakāra’.

**Dviteeya Brahmane-** ‘a second Brahman’;

When a heretic arrived at Kānchipuram to defile the doctrine of Rāmānuja, Vēdānta Deśika deputed his foremost disciple Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar to proceed to Perumāl Koil from Śrirangam and face the challenge. Tirumalai Śrinivasāchārya accompanied Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar to Kānchipuram and witnessed the great debate. Noticing the mastery and skill in the arguments of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, Tirumalai

Śrinivasāchārya wondered whether the tenets put forth by the Jīyar in defense of Rāmānuja's doctrine were 'Apara Brahma Śrishti' – 'the creation of a second Brahman'. When Tirumalai Śrinivasāchārya recounted these events to Vēdānta Deśika, Deśika became pleased and blessed his disciple Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar referring to him as truly 'Dviteeya Brahmane' – 'a second Brahman'. Referring to this, Ghatikashatam Ammāl uses the title Dviteeya Brahmane while composing the Taniyan on his Âchārya Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar.

**Pranataartim Vidhunvate** – 'remover of obstacles of those who surrender';

'Vidhu' means to 'drive away'. There is a pun employed in the term 'Pranataarti Vidhunvate'. Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar was also called as Perarulāla Jīyar, having been named after Lord Varadarāja. Therefore the term 'Pranataarti Vidhunvate' which refers to both Lord Varada and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar has been used. Lord Varadarāja is also called as 'Pranataarti Hara', i.e. 'one who removes the obstacles of those who surrender to Him'. Similarly Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar is capable of removing the obstacles of those disciples who seek his refuge. This is another reason for the appropriate use of the term 'Dviteeya Brahmane'.

**Namaha** – I bow!

It was Vēdānta Deśika who affixed upon his foremost disciple the three laudatory titles – 'Brahmatantra Swatantra' (by the grace of Lord Varada), 'Paryāya Bhāshyakāra' and 'Dviteeya Brahmane'! Therefore in reality, it was Vēdānta Deśika himself who conferred this Taniyan on the Jīyar! Taking cue from Vēdānta Deśika's benedictions, it was Ghatikashatam Ammāl who composed and then recited the full laudatory verse in praise of his Âchārya 'Pranatārtihara'. Such is the essence behind the composition of the verse!

### Taniyan 3

श्रीमान् पर्यायरामानुजयतिनृपतिर्ब्रह्मतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रो  
वेदान्ताचार्यदीव्यत्पदनळिनरसास्वादसच्चञ्चरीकः ।

आचार्याराधित श्रीहयवदनसमाराधनो हस्तिनाथो  
योगीशानः स जीयाद अनवधिमहिमा नित्यमत्यद्भुतश्रीः ॥

śrīmān paryāyārāmānujayatinṛpatirbrahmatantrasvatantro  
vēdāntācāryadīvyatpadanaḷinarasāsvādasaccañcarīkaḥ .  
ācāryārādhitā śrīhayavadanasamārādhanō hastināthō  
yōgīśānaḥ sa jīyād anavadhimahimā nityamatyadbhutaśrīḥ ..

*"May there be victory to the limitless greatness and undying, extraordinary glory of Hasthinātha Yogi, who is well known as 'Paryāya Rāmānuja' Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, the one who is verily a bee that incessantly longs to savor the nectar of the divine lotus feet of Vēdānta Deśika, and the one who offered appropriate servitude to the Archrāvighraha of Lakshmi-Hayagreeva which was earlier worshipped by the king among ascetics Āchārya Rāmānuja himself!"*

**Srimān Paryāya Rāmānuja Yatinrupathi Brahmatantra Swatantra Hasthinātho Yogeeshān:**

Refers to Perarulāla Jīyar or Hasthinātha Yogi, who was like Bhāshyakāra/Yatirāja

**Vēdāntāchārya Dīivya Pada Nalina Rasāsvāda Sacchanchareekaha:**

Perarulāla Jīyar was a bee that incessantly longed to savor the nectar of the divine lotus feet of Vēdānta Deśika

**Âchārya Ârādhita Śri-Hayavadana Samārādhano:**

The one who performed Samyak-Ârādhana or 'befitting worship'; or one who offered 'appropriate servitude' to the Archrāvighraha of Lakshmi-Hayagreeva which was previously worshipped by Âchārya Rāmānuja and Vêdānta Deśika!

The Archrāvighraha of Lakshmi-Hayagreeva which was first worshipped by Bhāshyakāra now came to receive worship in the capable hands of Paryāya Bhāshyakāra, such is the meaning!

**Sa Jeeyād Anavadhi Mahima Nithyam Atyadhbhuta Sreehi:**

Verily, let there be victory to his (Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar's) limitless greatness and eternal, most-wonderful glory!

This beautiful Taniyan has been composed by Śri Śrinivasa Triteeya Brahmatantra Swatantara Swāmi.

## The Laudatory titles of Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar:

श्रीमद्वेदमार्गप्रतिष्ठापनाचार्य ।

śrīmadvēdamārgapraṭiṣṭhāpanācārya

Śrīmad Vedamārga is same as Śrīmad Vēdānta Siddhānta; also called Sanaatana Dhrama; the primeval, the ancient, the eternal doctrine as revealed by Śrīman Nārāyana

Pratishtāpana means 'to establish'

Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar is the Âchārya who re-established Śrīmad Vedamārga as previously accomplished by Purvāchāryas (previous preceptors).

परमहंसपरिव्राजकाचार्य ।

paramahaṃsaparivrājakācārya

Paramahamsa means one who has subdued all his senses, and therefore has become an ascetic of the highest order. The one who imparts and practices the knowledge of 'Brahma Vidya' alone qualifies as Paramahamsa.

Parivrājaka refers to a Sannyāsin, one who has taken to ascetism by renouncing the world. The term 'Parivrājaka' also signifies that such an ascetic 'travels' (vrajati) in order to propogate the doctrine that he upholds.

Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar accepted the order of an ascetic, like Rāmānuja, so as to re-establish Śrīmad Vedamārga.

सर्वतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रोभयवेदान्तचार्य ।

sarvatantrasvatantrōbhayavēdāntacārya

Sarva Tantra Swatantra- the one who is adept in all Tantras (systems/ or doctrines)

Ubhaya Vêdânta Âchārya means the preceptor of the dual Vêdā- 1) Vêdānta and 2) Divya Prabandha or the Dramida Vêdā;

Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar learnt the Śrī Bhāshya and the Bhagavad Vishayam as taught by the Sat Sampradāya through his Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika. Therefore Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar became the next Śrī Bhāshya Bhagavad Vishaya Ubhaya Vedāntāchārya!

श्रीमत्कविकथककंठीरवचरणनळिनयुगळविन्यस्त समस्तात्मभराः ।

śrīmatkavikathakakaṇṭhīravacaraṇaṇaḷinayugaḷavinyasta samastātmabharāḥ

Kanteerava means a lion; Kavi means a poet and Kathaka means a debater or logician; Śrī Kavikathaka Kanteerava means 'a lion among poets and logicians' referring to Vêdānta Deśika; who was also called 'Kavitārkika Kesari' (Kesari also means lion)

Charana Nalina Yugala means 'the twin lotus feet' of Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika

Vinyasta means to entrust; to surrender completely

Samasta Atma Bhara; Samasta means the entirety or all; Atma Bhara means the burden of the self, i.e the burden of the welfare of one's inner self

Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar had entrusted the responsibility of deliverance of his self to his Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika; he had completely surrendered himself to the lotus feet of his Âchārya, such is the meaning!

श्रीभगवद्रामानुजसिद्धान्तनिर्धारणसार्वभौम ।

śrībhagavadrāmānujasiddhāntanirdhāraṇasārvabhauma

Means 'the Âchārya who established the doctrine of Rāmānuja'; Nirdhārana- means the act of settling or determining; Sārvabouma means the ultimate authority; this conveys the adeptness of Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar with respect to the doctrine of

Rāmānuja; he was the final word, the ultimate authority on the tenets of the doctrine of Rāmānuja and was adept in establishing the doctrine of Rāmānuja when encountering opponents of other doctrines.

These doctrinal secrets pertaining to the quintessential meaning of all the Taniyans of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar were revealed to us directly by our Âchārya, his holiness Śrīmad Abhinava Vāgeesha Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, the 36<sup>th</sup> Peetadhipathi of the Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi Matam.

*Śrī Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmine Namaha /*



## **The Divine glory of Śri Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar**

- 1) Tiru Avatāram of Śri Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar was in Kali 4388, Vyaya Samvatsara, Shaka 1208, i.e. 1286 C.E; Purattāsi Māsam, Tiruvona Nakshatra; in the Tiruvamsham of Śri Veeravalli Perumāl of Koundinya Gotra. He is named Veeravalli Hastīshar.
- 2) Veeravalli Hastīshar performs 'Sishya Vritti Sweekaram' at a very young age from Swāmi Nigamantha Maha Deśika, the Ubhaya Vēdānta Pravartaka of Rāmānuja Siddhāntam. This occurs at Perumāl Koil, Kānchipuram. Śri Veeravalli Hastīshar composes the first Taniyan on his Āchārya Swāmi Vēdānta Deśika- Namaha Padamidam Bhuyāt Tasmai Vēnkatasuraye / Yadvaag Amruta Sekena Sanjivitām Idam Jagat //
- 3) Perarulāla Jīyar receives the Śri Bhāshya Pravachanam from Vēdānta Deśika.
- 4) One hundred 'Vādams' of Swāmi Vēdānta Deśika at Srirangam against the fallacious interpretations of the Advaitins is recorded onto a 'Pattolai' by Perarulāla Jīyar. This becomes the work 'Shatadushani' composed by Vēdānta Deśika!
- 5) Veeravalli Hastīshar becomes rooted in dispassion. Like Yatirāja, he accepts Sannyāsa by the grace of Lord Varadarāja at Perumāl Koil, Kānchipuram. Through his own Āchārya Vēdānta Deśika, he receives the necessary Mantras and also the title of 'Perarulāla Jīyar'.  
The Taniyan "Hastīsham Lokavikhyātam Koundinyām Vidushām Varam / Rāmānujarya Siddhānta

Sthapanāchāryam Aashraye //” is composed in praise of Perarulāla Jīyar!

- 6) Perarulāla Jīyar moves to Śrīrangam with his Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika. Śrī Vêdānta Deśika performs Siddhānta Pravachanam there. Jīyar serves the lotus feet of his Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika.
  - 7) Swāmi Nayanār Âchārya is the younger co-disciple of Perarulāla Jīyar. He composes the verses ‘Śrīmān Vênkatanāthāryaha’ and recites it along with the verse ‘Namaha Padamidam’ composed earlier by Perarulāla Jīyar. This occurs at Perumāl Koil, Kānchipuram, Kali year 4430, Vibhava Samvatsara, 1328 C.E., Chittirai Māsam, Punarvasu Nakshatra, Shukla Paksha.
  - 8) On one occasion, Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika commands Perarulāla Jīyar to proceed to Perumāl Koil, Kānchipuram in order to meet the challenge of an Advaitin scholar and heretic who had come to defile the doctrine of Rāmānuja. The Jīyar first proceeds to Thooppul and circumambulates the ‘Tirumāligai’ of his Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika before engaging in debate. Perarulāla Jīyar arrives at Kānchipuram, defeats the opponent in debate and re-establishes the Rāmānuja Siddhānta!
- Arulappādu Samarpanam with the title of ‘Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar’ given by Lord Varadarāja Perumāl to the Jīyar! Jīyar returns to Śrīrangam in order to serve the feet of his Âchārya. Vêdānta Deśika verily bestows the title ‘Brahmatantra Swatantra’ upon his Sadsishya Perarulāla Jīyar!
- 9) Turushkas raid Śrīrangam. Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika protects the Śruta Prakāshika. United with Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and other disciples, Vêdānta Deśika seeks shelter at Satyakālam! Jīyar continues to serve the lotus feet of his Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika. Vêdānta Deśika and his disciples move to Tirunārāyanapuram to seek the grace of the Lord

of Yadugiri. Vêdânta Deśika composes a gloss on the Bhagavad Vishayam. Śrī Bhāshyakāra showers his grace on Nayanār Âchārya!

- 10) Vêdânta Deśika performs Bhagavad Vishaya Pravachanam at Tirunārāyanapuram. Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar refrains from attending the Pravachanam, although Vêdânta Deśika permits him to do so. Jīyar chooses instead to imbibe the same through Nayanār Âchārya! This surprising move shows the humility of this Jīyar. He did not wish to accept the status of an Âchārya on-par with Nayanār, so as to honor the words of Śrī Bhāshyakāra. Nayanār Âchārya is younger to him in age, yet Jīyar seeks permission from Vêdânta Deśika to become the disciple of Nayanār. He also had utmost respect for the son of his Âchārya. According to tradition, a disciple receiving the doctrinal instruction from a preceptor should perform, in future, the initiation for the preceptor's son or grandson as a mark of respect. Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar however went above and beyond; and verily chose to become the disciple of his preceptor's son as a mark of respect. This sense of subservience to one's own Âchārya shown by Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar is unprecedented and unparalleled!
- 11) Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar composes the verse 'Śrīman Lakshmana Yogindra' in praise of Nainār Âchārya, his Bhagavad Vishayam Âchārya. Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar also composes the 'Rāmānuja Dayāpātram' verse in honor of his Prāchārya Vêdânta Deśika. The rendering of these most excellent verses is performed at Tirunārāyanapuram, in Kali year 4440, Bahudhānya, 1338 C.E.; Aavani Māsam, Hasta Nakshatra, Shukla Dviteeya!
- 12) Vêdânta Deśika and disciples return to Satyakālam. They hear that Gopanna had defeated the Turushkaas! Gopanna restores Aḷhaghiya Manavālan and His consorts to

Śrīrangam and arranges for the return of Vêdānta Deśika to Śrīrangam.

A delighted Vêdānta Deśika returns to Śrīrangam with disciples. Re-establishes the Adhyayanotsavam in the 'Sarvadhari' Samvatsara, 1348 C.E. Vêdānta Deśika consecrates the Âḷvār Vīgrahams in the temple. Deśika also performs Ubhaya Vêdānta Pravachanam at the temple in the precincts of the Tāyār Sannidhi. Jīyar composes a laudatory verse 'Purvam Tat Parakāla' in honor of the restoration of the Adhyayanotsavam by his Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika!

13) Vêdānta Deśika composes the Rahasya Traya Sāra. Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar receives the essence of Rahasya Traya Sāra from Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika himself!

14) A scholar from Kāshi arrives at Perumāl Koil, Kānchipuram with a view to oppose the doctrine of Rāmānuja. Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika deposes his beloved disciple Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar to face the stiff challenge.

The Jīyar first proceeds to Thooppil and circumambulates the 'Tirumāligai' of his Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika prior to engaging in the debate. Such was the Jīyar's 'Ananya Âchārya Bhakti'!

Then arriving at the Tirumandapam in Perumāl Koil, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar fulfills the wish of his preceptor by becoming victorious and overcoming the opponent in a debate that lasted eight days! The opponent surrenders to the lotus feet of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar.

15) Ghatikashatam Ammāl and Kidāmbi Nayanār seek refuge at the feet of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar! The Jīyar bestows them with Panchasamskāras and Mantra Rahasyas!

Jīyar returns to Śrīrangam along with his new disciples in order to serve the feet of his Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika.

16) Being extremely delighted upon hearing the manner in which his disciple became victorious in debate, Vêdānta

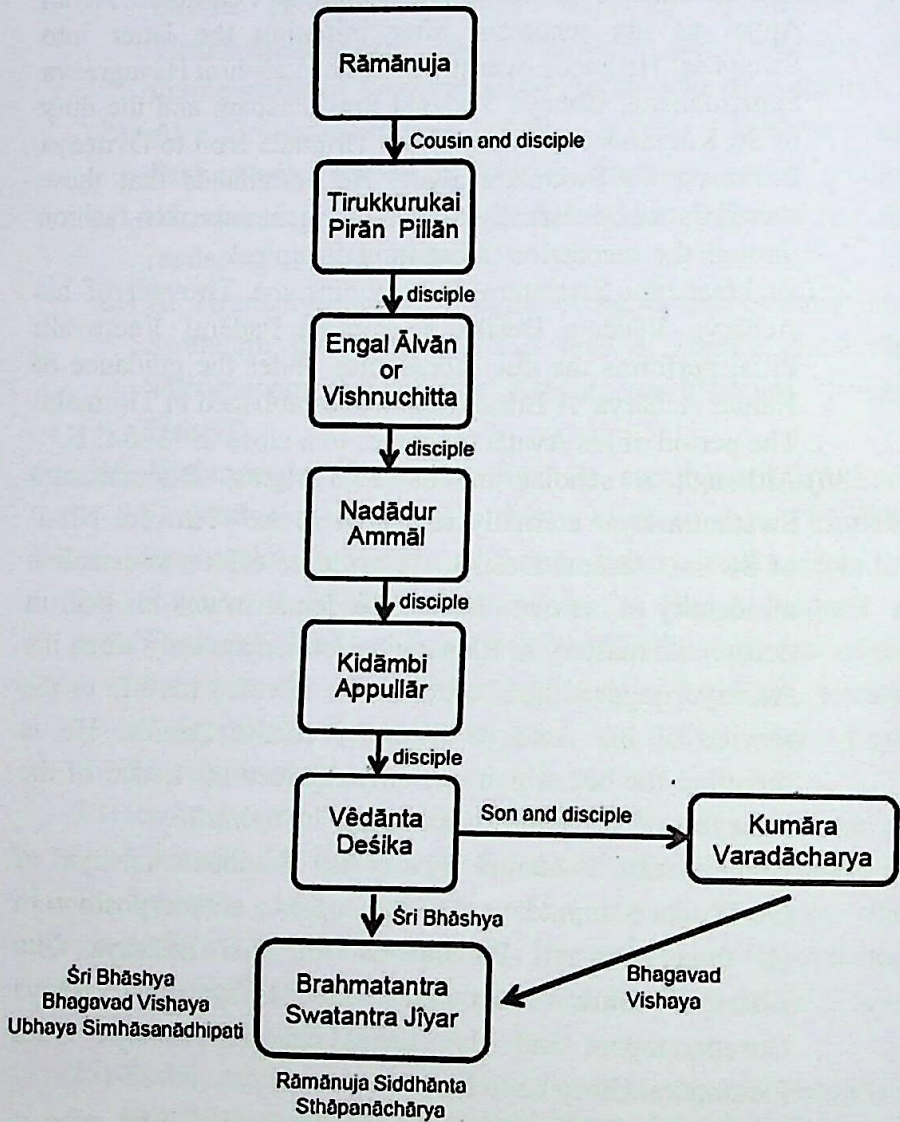
Deśika calls Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar as ‘Paryāya Bhāshyakārāya’, ‘One who is like Bhāshyakāra’! Tirumalai Śrinivasāchārya, who witnessed the debate, recounts the matter to Vêdānta Deśika wondering if the Vādams put forth by Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar were ‘Apara Brahma Śrishti’! Vêdānta Deśika agrees with the sentiments of Tirumalai Śrinivasāchārya and calls Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar as ‘Dviteeya Brahman’, i.e a second Brahman! Ghatikashatam Ammāl, taking cue from the benedictions of Vêdānta Deśika, composes the Taniyan ‘Paryāya Bhāshyakārāya’ on his Âchārya Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar!

- 17) Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar composes the Divya Sūri Stuti and offers it to Vêdānta Deśika for review. Deśika remarks that those beautiful verses are very pleasing to his ears!
- 18) Lord Varadarāja pronounces His seventh instruction! The day is an Amāvāsya of Vikaarin Samvatsara, Mesha-Chittirai, Vaishaka, and Shukla Pratipad; i.e. Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> March, 1359 C.E. Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar is now appointed as the Rāmānuja Siddhānta Pravartaka! He is also appointed as the Pradhāna Âchārya of a Matam at Kānchipuram. Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika bestows the Divya Mangala Vighraha of Lakshmi Hayagreeva upon his disciple and ‘Jnāna Putra’ Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar! The Archā Vighraha becomes the Ârādhya Daivā of the Matam! Vêdānta Deśika also bestows a pair of Shanka-Chakra Mudras to the Jīyar for the purpose of performing the Panchasamskāra.
- 19) With his head resting on the lap of Nainār Âchārya and lotus feet placed on the lap of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika attains Parama Padam! The year is Saumya Samvatsara; i.e Wednesday, November 14, 1369!

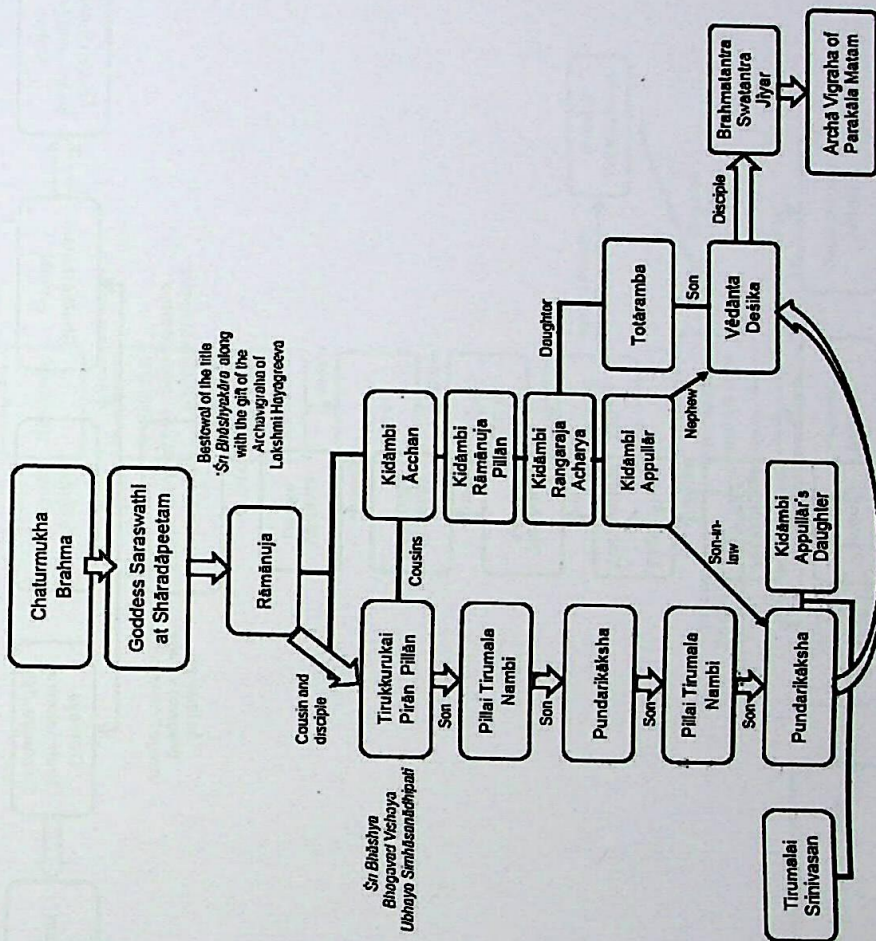
- 20) Nainār Âchārya and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar establish the Rāmānuja Matham according to the teachings of Vêdānta Deśika! They consecrate the Archā of Vêdānta Deśika at several places including Śrirangam and Tirunārāyanapuram! They categorize and catalogue the divine works of Vêdānta Deśika for the sake of posterity!
- 21) At Tiru-tanja-māmani Koil, Nainār Âchārya and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar establish the correct method of rendering the Deśika Prabandhams, followed by the rendering of Pillai Andādi!
- 22) At Tirunārāyanapuram, Nainār Âchārya and Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar render a full seva of Deśika Prabandha Samarpanam through the Arayar, on Phalguni Uttiram Tirunāl!
- 23) Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar is commanded by Lord Tiruvēkatamudayān in a dream to proceed to Tirumala. Jīyar seeks the consent of Nainār Âchārya and accepts the position of Śrikārya Dhurandhara of Periya Perumāl at Tirumala! The Lord hands over the Tirukkol Mudrai of the temple to the Jīyar through the agency of the priests! Arulappādu Samarpanam to the Jīyar by Lord Tiruvēnkatesha!
- 24) Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar establishes a Matam at Tirumala. He consecrates the Archā of Vêdānta Deśika at Tirumala and Tirupathi. The Jīyar continues the performance of Lakshmi Hayagreeva Samārādhana, Ubhaya Vêdānta Pravachanam and the duty of Śri Kārya Dhurandhara at Tirumala!
- 25) Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar teaches the Śri Bhāshya Bhagavad Vishaya Ubhaya Vêdānta, Gita Bhāshya and Rahasya Traya Sāra to his disciples.
- 26) Jīyar has seven chief disciples among numerous others - Ghatikashatam Ammāl, Kidāmbi Nayanār, Komandur Ācchan, Pillai Appai, Perarulāla Aiyan Appai, Kandāдай Āndān, and Veeravalli Pillai!

- 27) Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar firmly establishes the Rāmānuja Siddhāntam according to the Deśika Sat-Sampradāyam!
- 28) Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar appoints Perarulāla Aiyan Appai as his successor after initiating the latter into Sannyāsa! He hands over the duties of Lakshmi Hayagreeva Samārādhana, Ubhaya Vêdānta Pravachanam and the duty of Śri Kārya Dhurandhara of the Tirumala Koil to Dviteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar! He commands that these sacred duties be eternally carried out in an unbroken fashion through the succession of befitting disciples!
- 29) Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar attains the Tiruvadi of his Âchārya Vêdānta Deśika at Parama Padam! Veeravalli Pillai performs the due sacred rites under the guidance of Nainār Âchārya. A Brindāvanam is established in Tirumala! The period of his Avatāram comes to a close in 1386 C.E.!
- 30) Although a scholar in his own rights, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar eternally remained as the 'Tiruvadi Nilai' of Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika. He made no efforts to establish an identity of his own. In fact, he demonstrated his skill in debate and mastery in Rāmānuja Siddhāntam only when his Âchārya required him to do so. He devoted his life to the service of his Âchārya Swāmi Vêdānta Deśika! He is therefore the bee which eternally rejoiced the nectar of the lotus feet of Vêdānta Deśika! Glory be to him!
- 31) Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar is the 'Pradhāna Âchārya' of the Deśika Sampradāyam. He occupies a central position in all three Âchārya Paramparas- the Śri Bhāshya Gita Bhāshya Guru Parampara; the Bhagavad Vishaya Guruparampara and also the Mantārtha Rahasya Guru Parampara. Glory be to him!
- 32) Glory to Perarulāla Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, who is verily like Śri Bhāshyakāra reappeared, and verily a second Brahman!

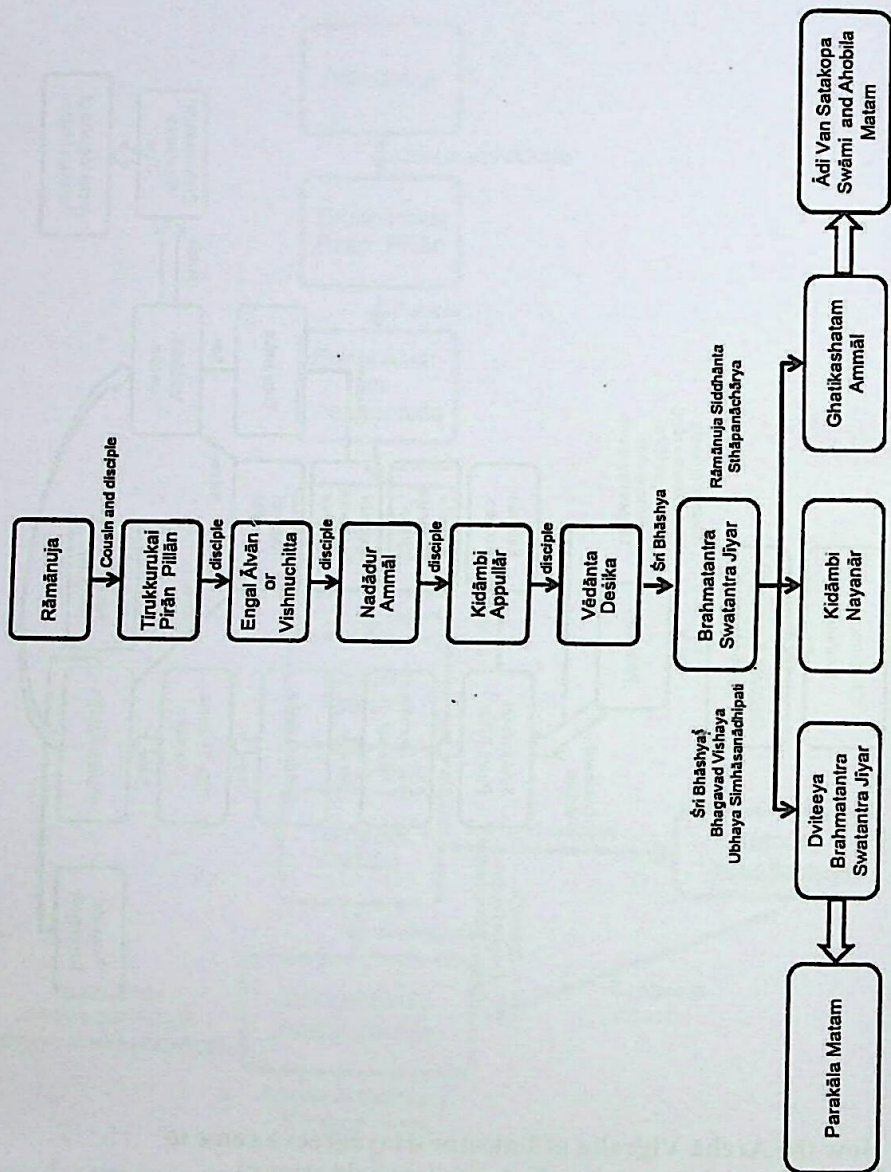
**Śri Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmine Namō Namaha //**



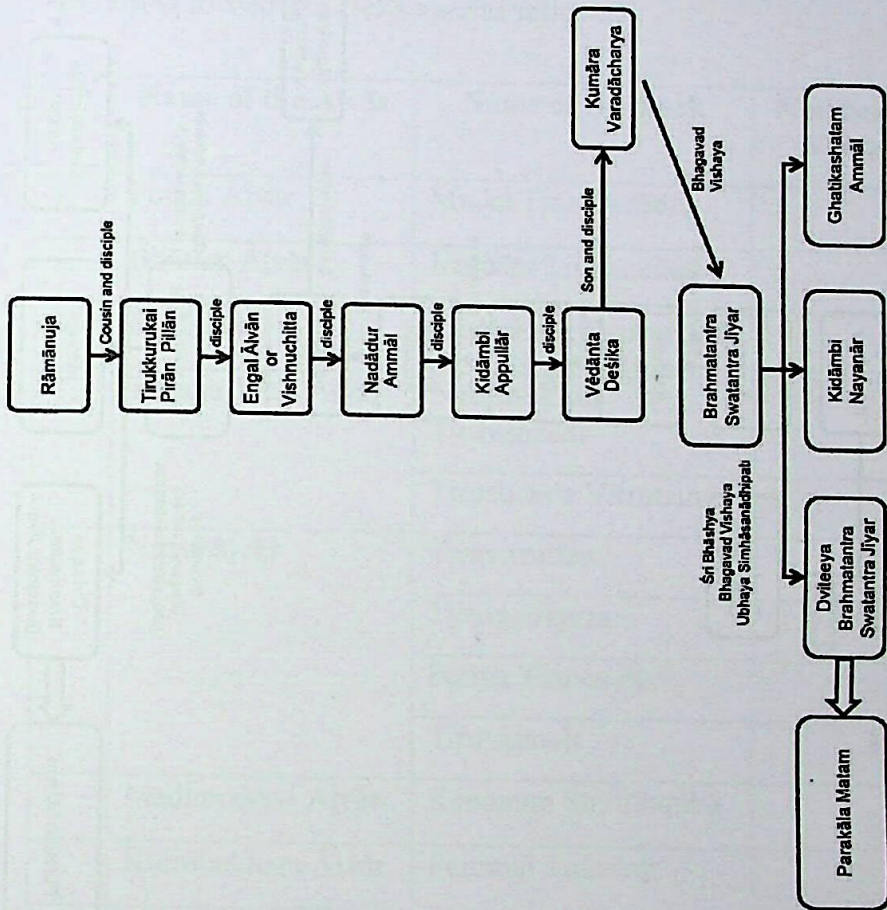
**The Śri Bhāshya Bhagavad Vishaya Ubhaya Simhaasana Parampara  
culminating in Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar**



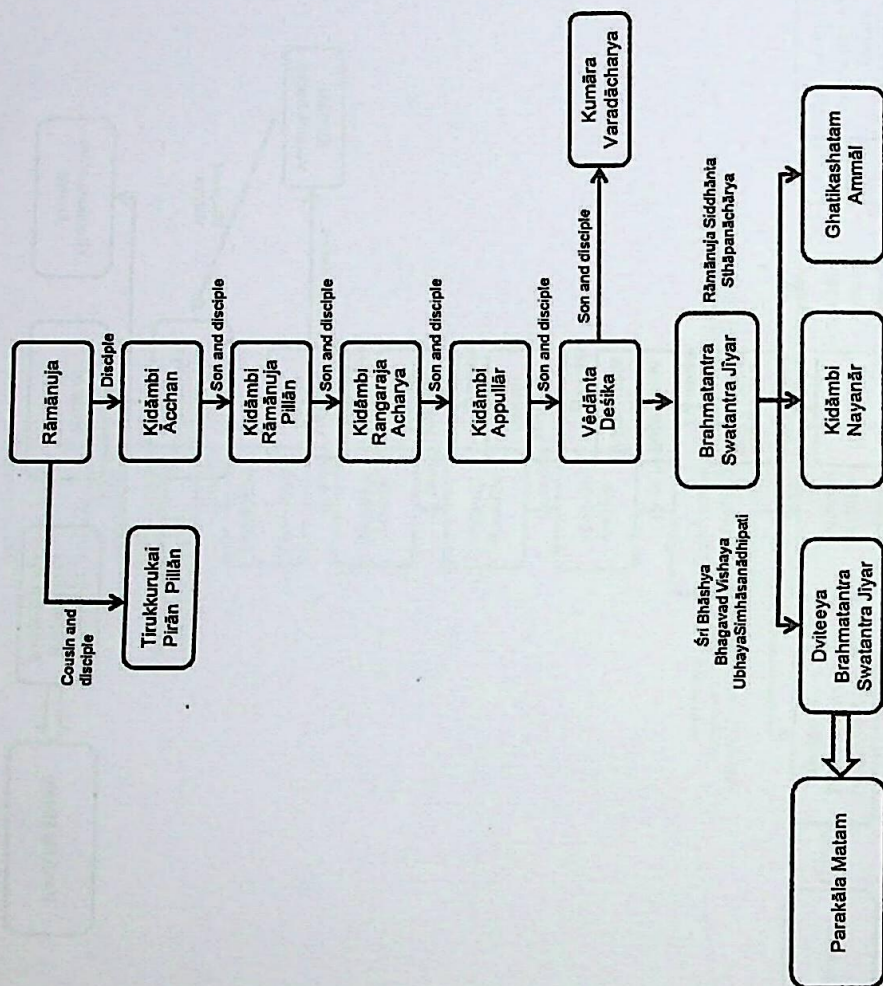
**How the Archā Vighraha of Lakshmi-Hayagreeva came to  
Brahmatantra Swatantra Jiyar (follow bold arrows)**



## The Śri Bhāshya - Gita Bhāshya Parampara through Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar



## The Bhagavad Vishaya Parampara through Brahmatantra Swatantra Jiyar



**The Śree Tattva and Mantraartha Rahasya Parampara through  
Brahmatantra Swatantra Jiyar**

## Appendix – 1

### The Works of the Âļvārs: 4000 Divya Prabandham

Śri Vêdānta Deśika has classified the works of the Âļvārs and has codified the exact number of each of their verses in his work 'Prabandha Sāra'. The compositions that constitute the 4000 according to Vêdānta Deśika are as follows:

	Name of the Âļvār	Name of the work	Number of Verses
1.	Poigai Âļvār	Mudal Tiruvandādi	100
2.	Bhūtam Âļvār	Irاندām Tiruvandādi	100
3.	Pey Âļvār	Moondram Tiruvandādi	100
4.	Tirumazhisai Âļvār	Naanmukhan Tiruvandādi	96
		Tiruchanda Virruttam	120
5.	Nammāļvār	Tiruviruttam	100
		Tiruvasiriyam	7
		Periya Tiruvandādi	87
		Tiruvaimoļi	1102
6.	Madhurakavi Âļvār	Kanninun Shiruttambu	11
7.	Kulashekhara Âļvār	Perumāl Tirumoļi	105
8.	Periyāļvār	Periyāļvār Tirumoļi	473
9.	Godai	Tiruppavai	30
		Nāchiyār Tirumoļi	143
10.	Tondar-adi-podi Âļvār	Tirumaalai	45
		Tirupalli Ezhuchi	10

11.	Tiruppan Āḷvār	Amalanaadipirān	10
12.	Tirumangai Āḷvār	Periya Tirumozī	1084
		5 other collections	169
	Tiruvarangattu Amudanaar  (not one among the Āḷvārs)	Rāmānuja Noottrandādi  (considered as a part of the 4000)	108
	Total 12 Āḷvārs + 1 disciple of Rāmānuja		4000 Verses

\*\*\*\*\*

## Appendix – 2

### The Works of Vêdānta Deśika

तत्सिद्धान्तसमृद्ध्यर्थं तद्विरोधिक्षयाय च ।  
स्नप्ने श्रीशप्रेरितश्रीरामानुजनिदेशतः ॥  
युग्मं संस्कृतप्राकृतागस्त्यभाषास्तोत्रसुभूषितान् ।  
विंशत्यधि शतग्रन्थान् चक्रे वेदान्तदेशिकः ॥

tatsiddhāntasaṃrddhyartham tadvirōdhikṣayāya ca .  
snapnē śrīśapreritaśrīrāmānujanidēśataḥ ..  
yugmaṃ saṃskṛtaprākṛtāgastyabhāṣāstōtrasubhūṣitān .  
viṃśatyadhiśatagranthān cakrē vēdāntadēśikaḥ ..

*“Directed in a dream by the Lord of Śree and in accordance with the command of Rāmānuja, Śrī Vêdānta Deśika authored more than a hundred and twenty works in Sanskrit, Prākṛit, and Tamil (language of Agasthya), well decorated with numerous stotras (hymns), for the purpose of enrichment of the doctrine and to dismiss its opposition!”*

निगमान्तगुरुप्रोक्तं ग्रन्थं कञ्चित् पठन्ति ये ।  
विमतस्थान् समस्तांश्च ते जयन्ति न संशयः ॥  
nigamāntaguruprōktaṃ granthaṃ kancit paṭhanti yē .  
vimatasthān samastāṃśca tē jayanti na saṃśayaḥ ..

*“Whosoever studies even a single work composed by Śrī Vêdānta Deśika, they will win over the entirety of opposing doctrines, without doubt!”*

-Āchāryāvatāra Ghatta of Parakāla Yati

Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and Nainār Āchārya have collected and classified the works of Vêdānta Deśika into several categories. These two chief disciples also ensured that all the works of Swāmi Deśika were engraved onto ‘Pattolai’ and preserved for posterity

A total of 121 Śree Granthams (or divine works) have been composed by Swāmi Deśika:

- 1) Stotrams or hymns in the praise of the Lord and His Consort- 32
- 2) Kaavyas or poems of lyrical meter- 8
- 3) Anushtānādi Shāstra or Manuals on the religious tenets of Śree Vaishnavism- 24
- 4) Rahasya or Doctrinal Secrets- 32
- 5) Bhāshya on the Bhagavath Vishayam- 1
- 6) Tamil Prabandhams- 24

The works are thus classified also for the sake of ease of remembrance – 32 Stotras and 32 Rahasyas, 24 Sanskrit Manuals (Anushtānādi Shāstra) and 24 Tamil Prabandhams, 8 Kaavya's and one Bhāshya on the Bhagavath Vishayam! This authentic classification and documentation carries utmost significance in the light of several spurious works that have cropped up in more recent times, and whose authorship is falsely being attributed to Vêdānta Deśika.

#### Stotras:

Hayagreeva Stotram	Nyāsa Vimshathi
Devanāyaka Panchasat	Nyāsa Tilakam
Achyutha Shatakam	Pāduka Sahasram
Gopala Vimshathi	Śri Stuti
Dehāleesha Stuti	Bhu Stuti
Varadarāja Panchashat	Nila Stuti
Yathothakari Stotram	Godha Stuti
Kāmāsikāshtakam	Sudarshanāshtakam
Ashtabhujāshtakam	Shodashāyudha Stotram
Sharanāgathi Deepikai	Garuda Dandakam
Paramārtha Stuti	Garuda Panchasat
Dayā Shatakam	Dramidopanishat Sāram
Bhagavad Dhyana Sopānam	Dramidopanishat Tātparya Ratnāvali
Dashāvatāra Stotram	Yatirāja Saptati
Abheetistavam	Dhāti Panchakam
Nyāsa Dashakam	Divya Desha Mangalāshāsanam

**Kaavyas:**

Yādavābhyudayam	Raghuveera Gadyam
Hamsa Sandesham	Sankalpa Suryodaya
Subhaashitaanivi	Bhugola Nirnayam
Vairāgya Panchakam	Vyākhyānam of Bhugola Nirnayam

**Anushtānādi Shāstra:**

Yagnopaveeta Prathistai	Tattva Mukta Kalaapam
Aarādhana Kramam	Sarvartha Siddhi
Hari Dina Tilakam	Adhikarana Darpanam
Vyākhyānam of Hari Dina Tilakam	Adhikarana Saaraavali
Śri Pancharatra Raksha	Tātparya Chandrika
Sachcharitra Raksha	Tattva Tika
Rahasya Rakshai	Seshvara Mimaamsa
Geetartha Sangraha Rakshai	Mimaamsa Padukai
Nikshepa Rakshai	Shatadushani
Nyāsa Vimsati Vyākhyānam	Chakara Samarthanam
Nyāya Siddhaanjanam	Isavasyopanishad Vyākhyānam
Nyāya Parishuddhi	Shilpārtha Sāram

**Rahasya Granthams:**

Sampradāya Parishuddhi	Sāra Deepam
Tattva Padavi	Śri Rahasya Traya Sāram

Rahsaya Padavi	Sāra Sāram
Tattva Navaneetam	Abhaya Pradaana Sāram
Rahasya Navaneetam	Tattva Shikāmani
Tattva Matrukai	Rahasya Shikaamani
Rahasya Matrukai	Anjali Vaibhavam
Tattva Sandesham	Pradhāna Shatakam
Rahasya Sandesham	Upakāra Sangraham
Rahasya Sandesha Vivaranam	Sāra Sangraham
Tattva Ratnāvali	Virodha Parihaaram
Tattva Ratnavali Pratipadya Sangraham	Munivaahana Bhogam
Rahsaya Ratnavali	Madhurakavi Hrudayam
Rahasya Ratnāvali Hrudayam	Paramapada Sopānam
Tattva Traya Chulakam	Paramata Bhangam
Sāra Sankshepam	Hastigiri Māhātmyam

### **Bhagavad Vishaya Grantham:**

Elupatthu Nālāyirappadi Vyākhyānam composed of 74,000 Padis, also called Nigama Parimalam.

This work is unfortunately not available currently.

### **Deśika Prabandhams:**

There are several works of Vêdānta Deśika composed in the Manipravala language- a combination of Sanskrit and Tamil. Within these works are interspersed about 454 verses in Tamil, composed to bring forth the gist of the inner meanings explained in these works. Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and Nainār Âchārya collected these 454 verses and categorized them into 24 works comprising the Deśika Prabandham. Along with these 454 verses

are recited 20 verses of the Pillai Andādi composed in praise of Vêdānta Deśika by Nainār Âchārya.

	Pāsurams		Pāsurams
Amrutha Ranjani	39	Tirumantra Churukku	10
Amruthaasvaadhini	37	Dvaya Churukku	12
Adhikaara Sangraham	56	Charama Śloka Churukku	11
Parama Pada Sopaanam	21	Gitaartha Sangraham	21
Para Matha Bhangam	54	Mummanikkovai	10
Attigiri Maahatmyam or Meyviradamaanmiyam	29	Navamani Maalai	10
Adaikkalappattu	11	Aahaaraniyamam	21
Artha Panchakam	11	Prabandha Saaram	18
Śree Vaishnavā Dinachari	10	5 other Prabandhams (not currently available) Pandupa, Kazal Pa, Ammaanai Pa, Usal Pa and Yesal Pa	50
Tiruchchinnamaalai	11	<b>Total</b>	<b>454</b>
Pannirunaamam	12	Pillai Andādi (by Nainār Âchārya)	20

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## Appendix – 3

### Tirunakshatrams

The dates of the birth of the Âļvārs and Âchāryas become important with respect to celebrating the annual festival of their descent upon this earth. This festival is called Tirunakshatram. For any given Âļvār or Âchārya, the time of re-occurrence of their birth star within the Solar month of their birth decides the date of their yearly Tirunakshatram. The Divya Sūri Stotra therefore contains this information pertaining to the Âļvārs and Âchāryas.

#### Important notes

- 1) All days and dates are derived from available traditional information and by using Ephemeris data compiled in- An Indian Ephemeris; by Diwan Bahadur L.D. Swāmikannu Pillai.
- 2) The beginning of the current Kali Yuga has been taken according to the calculations presented in an ancient astronomical text called the Surya Siddhānta. This text fixes the beginning of the current Kali year to Thursday, the mid-night between the 17th and 18th of February; the year 3102 B.C. - i.e 5113 years prior to 2012 C.E. At that time, it is said that the sun and moon were aligned in their longitude and the sun was present in the Zodiac of Mesha or Aries.
- 3) Kali year 1 (the year 3102 B.C.) corresponded to Pramāthi (of the Southern cycle).
- 4) The beginning of Saka year, said to have been developed by a Saka King, is taken as 78 C.E.
- 5) In the Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam of Triteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi, the dates are all

recorded as 'current' Kali years. We have followed the same convention in this book -all dates mentioned in this book are given uniformly as current Kali years, and current Saka years.

- 6) The English calendar dates are all according to the Julian Calendar unless after Wednesday, 2 September 1752
- 7) There has been considerable controversy with regards to the accurate date of Âļvārs. Mordern scholars have different opinions. Our intention is to present traditional information. What is more important is the order in which the Âļvārs are said to have taken birth. The traditional information presented herein clarifies that aspect without any doubts whasoever.
- 8) The dates of the Âchāryas are accurate, varying in some cases at most by one day. In places where the tithi is mentioned, this problem does not arise. Readers will have to keep this in mind while interpreting dates. So in certain cases, the actual time of birth could have been one day previous to what has been indicated in this book.

Table of Tirunakshatrams:

<b>Tiruavathāram</b>	<b>Solar Month / Tamil month</b>	<b>Star</b>
Śri Lakshmi Hayagreevar Tiruavathāram	Shravana, Poornima Tithi	
Śri Vishwaksenar	Aippisi	Poorādam
Poigai Âļvār	Aippisi	Shravana
Bhūtam Âļvār	Aippisi	Sravishta

Pey Âḷvār	Aippisi	Shatabhisha
Bhaktisaara	Tai	Magha
Nammāḷvār	Vaikhasi	Vishaaka
Madhurakavi	Chaitra	Chittira
Kulashekhara	Māsi	Punarvasu
Vishnuchitta	Aani	Svathi
Godai	Aani	Purvaphalguni
Tondaradipodi	Mārghaḷi	Jyeshtha
Tiruppānar	Vrishchika	Rohini
Tirumangai	Kārtikai	Krittika
Śri Nāthamuni	Aani	Anurādha
Uyyakondar	Chaitra	Krittika
Manakaal Nambi	Māsi	Magha
Śri Yāmunāchārya	Aadi	Uttarāshāda
Periya Nambi	Mārghaḷi	Jyeshtha
Tirukkottiyur Nambi	Vaikhasi	Rohini
Tiruvaranga Perumāl Arayar	Vaikhasi	Jyeshtha
Tirumala Nambi	Purattāsi	Anurādha
Tirumalai Andaan	Māsi	Magha
Śri Rāmānuja	Chaitra	Ardra
Tiru Kurugai Pirān Pillān	Aippisi	Purvāshāda
Kidāmbi Ācchan	Aippisi	Purvāshāda
Engal Āḷvān	Aani	Svathi
Nadādur Ammāl	Chaitra	Chittira

Kidāmbi Appullār	Chiatra	Ardra
Śri Vêdānta MahaDeśika	Purattāsi	Shravana
Nayanār Âchārya	Aavani	Rohini
Śri Brahmatantra Swatantrar	Purattāsi	Shravana

The additional information regarding the Kali year of birth, corresponding Samvatsara and day of birth is given by the Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam of Triteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi. These Guruparamparas were based on previous versions of the similar texts by earlier Âchāryas. Therefore, the Guruparamparas carry traditional information regarding lunar month of birth, the tithi, the Paksha, the Nakshatra, the Samvatsara, and the Kali year. With this information, we can compute the exact date of birth of these Âḷvārs and Âchāryas according to the English calendar.

Month	Solar Month	Sanskrit/Tamil	Time period English Calendar	Nakshatra Sanskrit/Tamil	Birth of Ālvārs or Āchāryas
1	Mesha	Chaitra/Chittirai	March-April	Chitra/Chittirai Ardra/Tiruvādirai Chitra/Chittirai Ardra/Tiruvādirai	Madhurakavi Rāmānuja Ammāl Appullār
2	Vriṣhabha	Vaiśākha/Vaikhasi	April-May	Vishāka/Visākam	Śatāri
3	Mithuna	Jyeshtha/Aani	May-June	Swathi/Swathi Anurādhā/Anusham	Vishnu Chitta Nāthamuni
4	Karka	Aashāda/Aadi	June-July	Purvaphalguni/Pooram Uttarāshāda/Uttirādam	Goda Yāmunāchārya
5	Simha	Shrāvana/Aavani	July-August	Rohini/Rohini	Nainār Āchārya
6	Kanya	Bādrapada/Purattāsi	August-September	Shravana/Thiruvona Shravana/Thiruvona	Vēdānta Deśika Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar
7	Tula	Asvina/Aippasi	September-October	Shravana/Thiruvona Sravishta/Avittam Shatabhisha/Sadayam Purvaashaada/Pooradam	Poigai Bhūtam Pey Pillān
8	Vrischika	Karttika/Karttigai	October-November	Rohini/Rohini Krittika/Karthigai	Śrī Pānar Tirumangai

9	Dhanus	Mārgasīrsa/Mārghaḥi	November-December	Jyeshtha/Kettai	Tondaraddipodi
10	Makara	Pausa/Tai	December-January	Makha/Magham	Tirumazhisai
11	Kumbha	Māgha/Māsi	January-February	Punarvasu/ Punarpoosam	Kulashekharā
12	Mina	Phālguna/Phanguni	February-March		

### A change in the English calendar- Julian to Gregorian:

The corresponding English month in which these Tirunakshatram occur has changed since 1752 C.E. due to a shift in the reference scale of the English calendar. See note below for details.

Month	Solar Month	Sanskrit/Tamil	Time period English Calendar	Nakshatra Sanskrit/Tamil	Birth of Ājvārs or Āchāryas
1	Mesha	Chaitra/Chittirai	April-May Ardra/Tiruvādirai	Chitra/Chittirai Ardra/Tiruvādirai Chitra/Chittirai Appullār	Madhurakavi Rāmānuja Ammāl
2	Vriṣabha	Vaishāka/Vaikhasi	May-June	Vishāka/Visākam	Śatāri
3	Mithuna	Jyeshtha/Aani	June-July	Swathi/Swathi Anurādhā/Anusham	Vishnu Chitta Nāthamuni

4	Karka	Aashāda/Aadi	July-August	Purvaphalguni/Pooram Uttarāshāda/Uttirādam	Goda Yāmunāchārya
5	Simha	Shravana/Aavani	August-September	Rohini/Rohini	Nainār Āchārya
6	Kanya	Bādrapada/ Purattāsi	September- October	Shravana/Thiruvona Shravana/Thiruvona	Vēdānta Deśika Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar
7	Tula	Asvina/Aippasi	October-November	Shravana/Thiruvona Sraivishṭa/Avittam Shatabhisha/Sadayam Purvāshāda/Pooradam	Poigai Bhūtam Pey Pillān
8	Vrischika	Karttika/Karttigai	November- December	Rohini/Rohini Krittika/Karthigai	Śrī Pānar Tirumangai
9	Dhanus	Mārgasirsa/ Mārgaḥaḷi	December- January	Jyeshtha/Kettai	Tondaraddipodi
10	Makara	Pausa/Tai	January-February	Makha/Magham	Tirumazhisai
11	Kumbha	Maagha/Maasi	February-March	Punarvasu/Punarpoosam	Kulashekhara
12	Mina	Phaalguna/Phanguni	March-April		

Note: The Western calendar is called Julian calendar since it was first initiated by Julius Caesar. In the year 1582 C.E., Pope Gregory XIII revised the Julian calendar to correct an error that was accumulating in the calculation of the Equinox and also to modify the method of allocating leap years. The result was that the Gregorian calendar began by skipping 10 days of the Julian calendar, restoring the occurrence of the Vernal Equinox to March 21. The British Parliament adopted the Gregorian modification in the month of September of the year 1752. By then, the accumulated error in the Julian Calendar was 11 days. At the time of switch from Julian to Gregorian calendar, 11 days were therefore dropped. The day after Wednesday, 2 September 1752 became Thursday, 24 September 1752 C.E. This slightly shifted the reference frame for the Solar months in comparison to the English Gregorian calendar, as indicated in the table below. It is to be remembered that this does not indicate any change in the method of calculation of these Tirunakshatrams. However, according to the current calendar, the corresponding English month in which these Tirunakshatram occur is only slightly different due to the above mentioned change since 1752 C.E. This is indicated in the above table.

Traditional dates of Âḷvārs and Âchāryas with respect to the Julian calendar:

<b>Tiruavathāram</b>	<b>Dates of Tiruavathāram</b>
Poigai Âḷvār	4140 B.C.
Bhūtam Âḷvār	4140 B.C.
Pey Âḷvār	4140 B.C.
Bhaktisaara	4140 B.C.
Madhurakavi	3223 B.C.
Nammāḷvār	3102 B.C.
Kulashekhara	3074 B.C.

Vishnuchitta	3055 B.C.
Godai	3004 B.C.
Tondaradipodi	2813 B.C.
Tiruppānar	2759 B.C.
Tirumangai	2704 B.C.
Śri Nāthamuni	583 C.E.
Uyyakondar	826 C.E.
Manakaal Nambi	831 C.E.
Śri Yāmunāchārya	Wednesday, July 17, 916 C.E.
Periya Nambi	Wednesday, December 1, 997 C.E.
Śri Rāmānuja	Thursday, April 4, 1017 C.E.
Tiru Kurugai Pirān Pillān	Sunday, October 21, 1061 C.E.
Kidāmbi Ācchan	Saturday, April 19, 1057 C.E.
Engal Ālvān	Thursday, June 14, 1106 C.E.
Nadādur Ammāl	Monday, March 29, 1165 C.E.
Kidāmbi Appullār	Thursday, April 9, 1220 C.E.

Traditional dates according to the English calendar with respect to the life and times of Vêdânta Deśika, Brahmaṭantra Swatantra Jīyar and Nainār Âchārya:

Important Events	Dates
Birth of Thooppil Vênkatanātha	Sunday, September 8, 1269 C.E.
Nadādur Ammāl blesses young Vênkatanātha	1274 C.E.
Nadādur Ammāl ascends to Parama Padam	1275 C.E.
Vêdânta Deśika is married to young Tirumangai	1284 C.E.
Birth of Śrī Veravalli Hastīshar	Sunday, September 1 <sup>st</sup> , 1286 C.E.
Vêdânta Deśika completes his studies	1289 C.E.
Kidāmbi Appullār ascends to Parama Padam	1295 C.E.
Lakshmi Hayagreeva Archā Vighraha bestowed to Vêdânta Deśika by Pundarikāksha	1302 C.E.
Birth of Kumāra Varadāchārya	Wednesday, August 11, 1316 C.E.
Śrī Bhāshya Pravachanam by Vêdânta Deśika at Perumāl Koil Kānchipuram; Rendering of the verse "Namaha Padiamidam" and Tiruavathāram of "Śrīman Vênkatanāthārya"	Saturday, April 16, 1328 C.E.
Sirrangam plundered by the Turushkas; Protection of the Śruta Prakāshika	1336 C.E.
Bhagavad Vishaya Pravachanam by Vêdânta Deśika at Tirunārāyanapuram; Tiruavathāram of the verses "Śrīman Lakshmana Yogindra" and "Rāmānuja Daya Pātram"	Tuesday, August 18, 1338 C.E.
Restoration of Śrirangam by Gopanna and return of Vêdânta Deśika	1347 - 1348 C.E.

Resumption of the Adhyāyānotsavam with consecration of the Âḷvārs and Âchāryas by Vêdānta Deśika	November-December of 1348 C.E.
Lakshmi Hayagreeva Archā Vighraha bestowed to Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar by Vêdānta Deśika Matam established at Thooppul, Kānchipuram	1359 C.E.
Lord Varadarāja proclaims the Seventh Instruction, Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar as Rāmānuja Siddhānta Sthapanāchārya	Friday, March 29, 1359 C.E.
Vêdānta Deśika ascends to Parama Padam	Wednesday, November 14, 1369 C.E.
Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar ascends to Parama Padam	1386 C.E.
Nayanār Âchārya ascends to Parama Padam	Sunday, March 3, 1415 C.E.

## References:

- 1) Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam; a condensed version in Manipravaalam language printed in Telugu script; edited by Śrīmān Nootana Durgam Śrinivasa Raghavachar; 1911
- 2) An Indian Ephemeris; Diwan Bahadur L.D. Swāmikannu Pillai; Volume I to Volume VI; Madras; 1922

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## Appendix – 4

### Avatāra Rahasya of Âlvārs and Âchāryas

#### Âlvārs

##### Poigai Âlvār

Amsa: Pāñchajanya

Year: Dvapara Yuga 862962, Siddharti Varsham

Solar Month: Aippisi

Paksha: Shukla

Tithi: Ashtami, 8

Asterism: Shravana

B.C. 4140.

Place: In a golden lotus in the Poigai Pushkarini, Yathoktakāri temple, Kāñchipuram

##### Bhūtam Âlvār

Amsa: Kaumodāki

Year: Dvapara Yuga 862962, Siddharti Varsham

Solar Month: Aippisi

Paksha: Shukla

Tithi: Navami, 9

Asterism: Dhanishta

B.C. 4140.

Place: In a Mādhvi flower at Tirukadalmalai in Mahabalipuram

##### Pey Âlvār

Amsa: Nandaka

Year: Dvapara Yuga 862962, Siddharti Varsham

Solar Month: Aippisi

Paksha: Shukla

Tithi: Dashami, 10

Asterism: Shatabhishak

B.C. 4140.

Place: In a water Lilly at Mayurapura, (Mylapore) at Chennai

### **Tiru Mazhisai Âlvār**

Amsa: Sudarshana

Year: Dvapara Yuga 862962, Siddharti Varsham

Solar Month: Tai

Paksha: Krishna

Tithi: Prathama, 1

Asterism: Māgha

B.C. 4140.

Place: Mahisārapura

Lineage: As the son of Bhārgava

### **Nammālvār**

Amsa: Vishwaksena

Year: Kali Yuga, 1<sup>st</sup> Kali year, Pramāthi Varsham

Solar Month: Vaikhasi

Tithi: Poornima, 15

Asterism: Vishāka

B.C. 3102.

Place: Âlvār Tirunagari,

Lineage: As the son of Kāri and his wife Udayanangai, Sat-Shudra / Vellālar community

### **Madhurakavi Âlvār**

Amsa: Kumudar

Year: Dvapara Yuga 863879, Isvara Varsham

Solar Month: Mesha/Chittirai

Paksha: Shukla

Tithi: Chaturdashi, 14

Asterism: Chitra

B.C. 3223.

Place: Tirukkolor

Lineage: Purva Shikha Brahmin

### **Kulashekar Ājvār**

Amsa: Kausthubha

Year: Kali Yuga, 28<sup>th</sup> Kali year, Parābhava Varsham

Solar Month: Māsi

Paksha: Shukla

Tithi: Dwādashi, 12

Asterism: Punarvasu

B.C. 3074.

Place: Tiruvanjikkalam, Kerala

Lineage: Born as a prince and eventually became the King of the Kerala region

### **Periyālvār**

Amsa: Garuda

Year: Kali Yuga, 47<sup>th</sup> Kali year, Krodhana Varsham

Solar Month: Āni

Paksha: Shukla

Tithi: Ekadasi, 11

Asterism: Svāthi

B.C. 3055.

Place: Śrivilliputtur

Lineage: Born in a Purva Shikha family

### **Āndāl**

Amsa: Bhu Devi

Year: Kali Yuga, 98<sup>th</sup> Kali year, Nala Varsham

Solar Month: Ādi

Paksha: Shukla

Tithi: Chaturti, 4

Asterism: Purvaphālguni

B.C. 3004.

Place: Found in a Tulasi grove at Śrivilliputtur

### **Tondaradipodi Âlvār**

Amsa: Vanamāla

Year: Kali Yuga, 289<sup>th</sup> Kali year, Prabhava Varsham

Solar Month: Mārghaḷi

Paksha: Krishna

Tithi: Chaturdashi, 14

Asterism: Jyeshtha

B.C. 2813.

Place: Mandanguḍi

Lineage: Born in a Purva Shikha family

### **Tiruppān Âlvār**

Amsa: Śrīvatsa

Year: Kali Yuga, 343<sup>rd</sup> Kali year, Durmathi Varsham

Solar Month: Vriṣhchika

Paksha: Krishna

Tithi: Dviteeya, 2

Asterism: Rohini

B.C. 2759.

Place: Nichulāpura, Urayiur

Lineage: Brought up in the Pānar community

### **Tirumangai Âlvār**

Amsa: Sāranga

Year: Kali Yuga, 398<sup>th</sup> Kali year, Nala Varsham

Solar Month: Vriṣhchika

Tithi: Poornima, 15

Asterism: Krittika

B.C. 2704.

Place: Tiru Vāli Nadu

Lineage: Born as the son of a Shudra named Neelan

## Âchāryas

### Nāthamuni

Amsa: Dvirada Vaktra

Year: Kali Yuga, 3685<sup>th</sup> Kali year, Shobakrit Varsham

Solar Month: Âni

Paksha: Shukla

Tithi: Trayodashi, 13

Asterism: Anurādhā

C.E. 583.

Place: Veeranārāyanapuram

Lineage: Born as the son of Isvara Muni of Shatamarshana Gotra, of the Sottai family

### Uyyakkondār

Amsa: Jayathsena

Year: Kali Yuga, 3928<sup>th</sup> Kali year, Parābhava Varsham

Solar Month: Mesha/Chittirai

Paksha: Shukla

Tithi: Prathama, 1

Asterism: Krittika

Thursday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, C.E. 826.

Place: Thiruvellarai

### Manakkāl Nambi

Amsa: Kumudar

Year: Kali Yuga, 3933<sup>rd</sup> Kali year, Virodhi Varsham

Solar Month: Māsi

Paksha: Shukla

Tithi: Chaturdashi, 14

Asterism: Māgha

Sunday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, C.E. 831.

Place: Manakkāl

### Yāmunāchārya

Amsa: Simhāsana

Year: Kali Yuga, 4018<sup>th</sup> Kali year, Dhātu Varsham

Solar Month: Âdi

Tithi: Poornima, 15

**Asterism: Uttarāshāda**

**Wednesday, July 17, 916 C.E.**

**Place: Veeranārāyanapuram**

**Lineage: Born as the grandson of Nāthamuni, in the Sottai family of Shatamarshana Gotra**

**Periya Nambi:**

**Amsa: Kumuda**

**Year: Kali Yuga, 4099<sup>th</sup> Kali year, Hemalamba Varsham**

**Solar Month: Mārghaḷi**

**Paksha: Krishna**

**Tithi: Chaturdashi, 14**

**Asterism: Jyesta**

**Wednesday, December 1, 997 C.E.**

**Place: Śrīrangam**

**Rāmānuja**

**Amsa: Śrī, Nārāyana, Pāñchajanya, Sudarshana, Nandaka, Kaumodāki, Sāranga, Vishwakṣena with Pradhāna Amsa Ādisesha**

**Year: Kali Yuga, 4119<sup>th</sup> Kali year, Pingala Varsham**

**Solar Month: Mesha/Chittirai**

**Paksha: Shukla**

**Tithi: Panchami, 5**

**Asterism: Ādra**

**Thursday, 4 April, 1017 C.E.**

**Place: Śrīperumbudur**

**Lineage: Born to Asuri Keshavāchārya, a Somayaji Brahmin and his wife Bhumidevi**

**Tirukurugai Pirān Pillān**

**Amsa: Prachanda**

**Year: Kali Yuga, 4163<sup>rd</sup> Kali year, Plava Varsham**

**Solar Month: Aippasi/Tula**

**Paksha: Shukla**

**Tithi: Panchami, 5**

**Asterism: Purvāshāda**

**Sunday, October 21, 1061 C.E.**

**Place: Tirumala**

Lineage: Born second son of Tirumala Nambi, in the Sottai family of Shatamarshana Gotra

**Kidāmbi Ācchan**

Amsa: Chanda

Year: Kali Yuga, 4159<sup>th</sup> Kali year, Hemalamba Varsham

Solar Month: Mesha/Chittirai

Paksha: Shukla

Tithi: Dwadasi, 12

Asterism: Hasta

Saturday, April 19, 1057 C.E.

Place: Kānchipuram

**Engal Ālvān**

Amsa: Vijaya

Year: Kali Yuga, 4208<sup>th</sup> Kali year, Vyaya Varsham

Solar Month: Āni

Paksha: Shukla

Tithi: Dwadasi, 12

Asterism: Svati

Thursday, June 14, 1106 C.E.

Place: Tiruvellarai

**Nadādur Ammāl**

Amsa: Subhadra

Year: Kali Yuga, 4267<sup>th</sup> Kali year, Parthiva Varsham

Solar Month: Mesha/Chittirai

Tithi: Poornima, 15

Asterism: Chitra

Monday, March 29, 1165 C.E.

Place: Kānchipuram

**Kidāmbi Rāmānuja Pillān**

Amsa: Sarvanetra

Year: Kali Yuga, 4210<sup>th</sup> Kali year, Sarvadhari Varsham

Solar Month: Aippasi

Paksha: Shukla

Tithi: Panchami, 5

Asterism: Purvāshāda

Sunday, October 11, 1108 C.E.

Place: Kānchipuram

**Kidāmbi Ranga Rājar**

Amsa: Kumudāksha

Year: Kali Yuga, 4265<sup>th</sup> Kali year, Svabhānu Varsham

Solar Month: Panguni

Paksha: Shukla

Tithi: Shasti, 6

Asterism: Rohini

Sunday, March 1, 1164 C.E.

Place: Kānchipuram

**Kidāmbi Appullār**

Amsa: Suprathista

Year: Kali Yuga, 4322<sup>nd</sup> Kali year, Vikrama Varsham

Solar Month: Mesha/Chittirai

Paksha: Shukla

Tithi: Panchami, 5

Asterism: Âdra

Thursday, April 9, 1220 C.E.

Place: Kānchipuram

**Vēdānta Deśika**

Amsa: Vēṅkatēshwara, Rāmānuja, Vēṅkatēshwara Ghanta-  
'Tirumani Ājvār'

Year: Kali Yuga, 4371<sup>st</sup> Kali year, Śukla Varsham

Solar Month: Purattāsi

Paksha: Shukla

Tithi: Ekadashi, 11

Asterism: Tiruvonam/Shravana

Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1269 C.E.

Place: Tiruthanka, Thooppul Punyabhoomi, Kānchipuram

Lineage: Born to Anantasūri and Totāramba

**Kumāra Varadāchārya**

Amsa: Varadarāja Perumāl

Year: Kali Yuga, 4418<sup>th</sup> Kali year, Nala Varsham

Solar Month: Āvani

**Paksha: Krishna**

**Tithi: Ashtami, 8**

**Asterism: Rohini**

**Wednesday, 11 August, 1316 C.E.**

**Place: Kānchipuram**

**Lineage: Born to Vêdānta Deśika and Tirumangaiyār**

**Śri Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar**

**Year: Kali Yuga, 4388<sup>th</sup> Kali year, Vyaya Varsham**

**Solar Month: Purattāsi**

**Paksha: Shukla**

**Tithi: Dwadashi, 12**

**Asterism: Tiruvonam/Shravana**

**Sunday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1286 C.E.**

**Place: Kānchipuram**

**Lineage: Born in the Veeravalli Perumāl family of Koundinya  
Gotra**

## Appendix – 5

### The Seventh Instruction of Varadarāja Perumāl

Lord Varadarāja had proclaimed six instructions to Rāmānuja through Tiru Kacchi Nambigal or Kanchipurna. This served as the basis for the establishment of the Rāmānuja Darshanam. In order to ensure that the same doctrine earlier propounded by Rāmānuja be re-established on a firm footing, that compassionate Lord Varadarāja Himself spoke again, pronouncing His seventh instruction. In putting forth this divine mandate, the Lord Himself proclaims Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar as the Rāmānuja Siddhānta Sthapanāchārya. He allocates the necessary facilities for the propagation of 'Rāmānuja Siddhāntam' through the Sat-Sampradāyam of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar. The Lord also commands that all the followers of the doctrine of Rāmānuja accept this Jīyar and his disciplinic succession in the work of propagating the Siddhāntam. This pronouncement which was made by the Lord along with His consorts has been recorded in the form of an inscription engraved on one of the walls of His abode- Perumāl Koil, Kānchipuram.

This inscription was first published in the Madras Epigraphical Series of 1919 as record number 574 of Stone inscriptions collected during that year. Śri A.S. Ramanatha Ayyar then published the text of this record in *Epigraphia Indica*, Volume 25, No 34, July 1940 C.E. According to these epigraphical reports, it is the North wall of the second Praakara of Perumāl Koil that bears this inscription along its plinth portion.

This North wall of the second praakara bears numerous inscriptions among which a few pertain to the same time period. This particular record is found in a mix of Tamil and Grantha script. The text of this record is presented herein.

விகாரி ஸம்வத்ஸரத்து மேஷ மாதத்து பூர்வபக்ஷத்துப்  
 ப்ரதமையும் வெள்ளிக்கிழமையும் பெற்ற ஆஸ்வதி நாள்  
 அபிஷேக மண்டபத்து வீரவல்லாளன் ஸிம்மாஸனத்து  
 அரியனவல்லான் பந்தல்கீழ் நாமும் நம் பெண்ணுகளுடன்  
 சடகோபன் பாட்டுக்கேளாநிற்க, நம் வீடு கருமம் கேட்கும்  
 பெருமாஸ்தாதனும், நம் பட்டர்களும் சொல்லக்கேட்டு  
 “ப்ரம்மதந்த்ர ஸ்வதந்த்ர ஜீயன்” என்று நாம் பேர்  
 கொடுத்த வைஷ்ணவ தாஸனுக்கு நாம் கொடுத்தபடி.  
 இவனுக்கு உண்டான மடமும், மடத்தை நோக்கி வரும்  
 சேஷத்ரமும், சமாராதனமும், அதுக்கு வேண்டும்  
 முத்துக்களும், இவன் தேடின புத்தகங்களும், இதற்கு  
 வேண்டும் உபகரணங்களும் நம் ராமானுஜ தர்சனம்  
 நடக்கைக்காக, இவனுக்கு பின்பும் இவன் நியமித்த  
 இவனுடைய சிஷ்யர்கள் பரம்பரையாக இவற்றைக்  
 கைக்கொண்டு நடத்திப்போடக்கடவர்கள் ஆகவும்.  
 இவனை நம் ராமானுஜம் உடையாரும், நம் சமயத்தில்  
 உள்ளாரும் கைக்கொண்டு நடத்திப்போடச்  
 சொன்னோம்.  
 இச்செய்தியைக் கல்லிலும், செம்பிலும் வெட்டிக்  
 கொள்ளும்படி இவனுக்கு நாம் முடித்தபடியும்,  
 உடுத்தபடியும், பூசினபடியும் கொடுத்தோம். இப்படிக்குத்  
 திருவாய்மலர்ந்தருளின்படிக்கு கோயில்கணக்கு

பேரருளாளப்ரியன் எழுத்து, இத்திருமுகம் எழுதின  
சகாப்தம் ஆயிரத்து இருநூற்று எண்பத்து இரண்டாவது.

*Svasti Śri  
Tirumugappadi*

*Vikari Samvatsarattu Mesha Naayarru Purva Pakshattu  
Prathamiyum Velli-kkilamiyum Perra Asvathinaal,  
Abhisheka Mandapattu Vira Vallaalan Simhasanattu  
Ariyenavallaan Pandalkil Naamum Nam Pendugaldudan  
Sattakopan Paattu Kelanirka Nam Vidu Karumam Ketkum  
Perumālataatanum, Nam Bhattarkalum Solla-kketu,  
Brahma-Tantra-Swatantra Jiyan Enru Naam Per-  
kudduta Vaishnavadaasanukku, Naam Kudutappadi  
Ivanukku Undaana Matamum, Mathattai Nokki Varum  
Ksetramum, Samardhanamum, Adduku Vendum  
Muttukkalum, Ivan Tedina Pustakangalum, Idukku  
Vendum Upakaarangalum, Nam Rāmānujan Darshanam  
Nadakkai Kaaga Ivanukku Pinbum, Ivan Niyamitta  
Ivanudaya Sishyargal Paramparaiyaaga, Ivaiyirrai  
Kaikondur Nadatti Poddakkadavrgal Aagavum  
Ivanai Nam Rāmānujam Udaiyaarum Nam Samayattil  
Ullaarum Kaikondur Naddattippoda  
Chhonnom /*

*Ichheydiyai Kallilum Shembilum Vetti-  
kollumbadi Ivanukku Naam Mudittapadiyum  
Udduttapadiyum Pusinapadiyum Kuddutom / Ippadikku  
Tiruvaimalarnd Arulinapaddikku Koyil Kanakku  
Perulalapriyan Eluttu / Iitirumugam Eludina  
Sakabdam Aaiyarattu Iru-nooru Enbattu-Irand Aavadu //*

## Detailed Explanation:

Svasti- Well-being; Śree- Prosperity; Let there be well-being and prosperity! These words are etched in Grantha characters.

Tirumugappadi- the divine order; written in slightly smaller characters. This signifies that the order was divine, for it was coming from the God of Gods, Lord Devarāja Perumāl Himself!

Etat- this is; Sashanam- the instruction of; Sur-aasuraadhisa- the Lord of Suras and Asuras; Mauli- crown jewel; Ratna- gem; Prabhaaranam- shining with a reddish luster; Śrīmad- along with Śree; Hastigirishaya- the Lord of Hastigiri; Devadevasya- of the Lord of Lords, Devarāja Perumāl;

एतत् सुरासुराधीशमौलिरत्नप्रभारुणम् ।  
 श्रीमद्हस्तिगिरिशस्य देवदेवस्य शासनम् ॥  
 ētat surāsurādhīśa mauli ratna prabhāruṇam .  
 śrīmad hastigiriśasya dēvadēvasya śāsanam ..

*“Shining with the reddish hue emanating from the crown jewels of the supplicating God of divinities, this is the divine mandate of the God of Gods, the Lord of Hastigiri along with Śree!”*

Again in Grantha characters. This signifies that the order of Lord Varadarāja Perumāl was accepted by all. When the Suraasuras accept and bow down to the command of the Lord, the reddish hue emanating from the gems studding their crowns and diadems falls upon the ‘Tirumugappadi’. Therefore this divine order is being described as one bearing a reddish hue! Such is the significance.

Tamil characters from hereon-

Vikāri Samvatsarattu- in the year Vikaarin; Mesha Naayarru- Solar month of Mesha; Purva Pakshattu- Purva Paksha or the first

fortnight; Prathamiyum- first lunar day; i.e the first tithi; Vellikkilamiyum- on a Friday; Perra Asvathinaal- Asvathi Nakshatra or Ashwini Nakshatra;

The above mentioned details calculate to Amavasaya of Vikaarin Samvat Mesha-Chittirai Vaishaka Sukla Pratipad. The English calendar equivalent of this date is Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> March, 1359 C.E. The previous tithi or 15<sup>th</sup> lunar day of the previous month ended at around 9.6 hours after mean sunrise; Amavasaya began at around 9 hours 36 minutes after sunrise; and the previous Nakshatra Revathi ended approximately around 5.4 hours after mean sunrise on that Friday.

Abhisheka Mandapattu- in the Abhisheka Mantapa, a pavilion for ablution; Vira Vallallan- called Viravallaan; Simhāsanattu- while seated upon the throne; Ariyenavallaan Pandalkil- under the canopy called Ariyenavallaan; Naamum- We; Nam- Our; Pendugal-consorts; udan- along with; Sattakopan Paattu- the songs of Satakopa, i.e the Tiruvaimoļi of Nammāļvār; Kelanirka- while listening to; Nam Vidu- of Our residence, i.e the temple; Karumam Ketkum- supervisor of the activities; Perumāṭaatanum- Perumāṭ Taatan, the attendant of Perumāṭ of the Kanchi temple.

The lord was seated along with His consorts- Perundevi Tāyār along with Śree and Bhu. He was seated upon the throne called Viravallaalan. It is known from two other inscriptions of the temple (A.R 401 of 1919, and AR 572 of 1919) that King Vira Ballala was camping at Kānchipuram for some time prior to the date of this inscription. It is here that he was served by his friend Kampaya Naayaka, with whom he forged military alliance. This Vira Ballala probably gifted his throne to the Lord of Hastigiri, which was then called Viravallaalan Simhāsana! At the time when the Lord was seated in the Abhisheka Mantapam, the Śri Sooktis of Nammāļvār, called Tiruvaimoļi were being recited. The abhisheka mantapam on its east wall carries the inscription indicating that it was built by one

‘Elambilakkaattu Naayakar’, but carries no date. The inscriptions engraved along with this record point to the time during the rule of ‘Śrī Tribhuvana Chakravarthin Rajarajadeva’, whose 21<sup>st</sup> year of rule was around the year 1263 C.E. The word ‘Perumāl Taatan’ refers to a devotee of Perumāl who was engaged in supervising the affairs of the temple. It is to be pointed out that somewhere around this time, Śrī Tirumala Śrinivasāchārya, the son of Pundarikāksha and disciple of Vēdānta Deśika was appointed as the Śrī Kaarya Dhurandhara of the Perumāl Koil.

Nam Bhattarkalum- and Our priests; Solla-kketu- by the expressed request of, Brahma-Tantra-Swatantra Jiyan Enru- the person called Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar; Naam Per-kudduta Vaishnavadaasanukku- to that Vaishnavadāsa who has been named so by Us, Naam Kudutappadi- as a benediction from Us; Ivanukku- to him; Undaana Matamum- the Matam allocated to him; Mathattai Nokki Varum Ksetramum- the lands allocated to this Matha; Samardhanamum- the divine worship of Archā belonging to the Math, Adduku Vendum Muttukkalum- the expenses required for that; Ivan Tedina Pustakangalum- the books collected by him; Idukku Vendum Upakaarangalum- the resources required for that; nam Rāmānujan Darshanam- Our Rāmānuja Darshana; Nadakkai Kaaga - to propagate; Ivanukku- unto him;

This portion of the inscription indicates several important things:

- 1) That the Lord of Hastigiri Himself had bestowed the title of ‘Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar’ to a Vaishnava Daasa. This Vaishnava Daasa was none other than Perarulāla Jīyar, the chief disciple of Vēdānta Deśika.
- 2) A Matam was allocated to him. Lands were given for the construction and maintenance of this Matam.
- 3) The Matam was allocated for the purpose of propagating the Rāmānuja Siddhānta

- 4) Note the use of the word 'Nam Rāmānuja Darshanam'. Out of affection, the Lord says Nam Rāmānuja, 'Our Rāmānuja'! It should be remembered that the doctrine of Rāmānuja was in fact taught by the same Lord Varadarāja through His six instructions. The doctrine of Rāmānuja was therefore identical with the doctrine of Vêdānta propounded by the Lord Himself. This doctrine propounded by Rāmānuja was initially called Rāmānuja Darshanam or Emperumānār Darshanam. The term 'Visishtādvaita' came into use only later.
- 5) The Matam was also the center for Samārādhana, i.e. divine worship of the Archā Vighram that had been bestowed to the Matam. By the age of 90, Vêdānta Deśika had bestowed the Archā of Lakshmi Hayagreeva to his disciple Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar.
- 6) The Matam was also a 'Bhandaaram' 'repository' for books and manuscripts. The Śrī Koshams and Granthams of various doctrinal works of the Rāmānuja Siddhāntam were to be preserved here.

Pinbu- Also, Ivan- by him; Niyamitta- those appointed; Ivanudaya Sishyargal- his disciples; Paramparaiyaaga- in a disciplinic succession; Ivaiyirrai- these (disciples) may; Kaikondur- accept; Nadatti Poddakkadavrgal Aagavum- and continue the tradition.

The Lord also ordained that the Matam established by Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar continue to carry the work of propagating the Rāmānuja Darshanam, the Samārādhana of Archā Vighras and the safe preservation of books through an unbroken disciplinic succession. This tradition has thus been continued by the appointment of worth successors to the first Jīyar himself. The Lord's mandate has thus been followed for the last 654 years without interruption. 35 successive Âchāryas have adorned the sacred 'Peetam' since it was first adorned by Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar upon the command of Lord Varadarāja.

Ivanai- him; Nam Rāmānujam Udaiyaarum- the followers of Rāmānuja; Nam- Our; Samayattil Ullaarum- in (our) doctrine, i.e the Vaishnavās; Kaikondur- having accepted; Naddattippoda- and continue the work; Chhonnom- We have ordered!

This section of the divine mandate orders that all the followers of Rāmānuja Siddhānta, and those who have accepted the Vaishnava fold, to accept Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar and thereby continue to carry the work of propagating the Rāmānuja Darshanam forward.

Ichcheyiyai- this; Kallilum- in stone; Shembilum- in copper; Vettikollumbadi- be engraved; Ivanukku- to him; Naam Mudittapadiyum- flowers worn by Us; Udduttapadiyum- the clothes used by Us; Pusinapadiyum- the unguents anointed by Us, Kuddutom- We have presented!

The clothes worn by the Lord and His consorts, the unguents applied by them and the garlands worn by them to Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar are presented a token of affection upon the Jīyar by them. The engraving of the record on stone and copper is for the purpose of preserving it for posterity.

Ippadikku- thus; Tiruvaimalarnd Arulinapaddikku- graciously commanded (by the Lord); Koyil- temple; Kanakku- accountant; Perulalapriyan- Perulaalapriyan; Eluttu- may put this in writing.

This indicates that the temple accountant Perulaalapriyan put the divine commandment of Lord Varadarāja into written record.

Itirumugam- this divine order; Eludina- was written; Sakabdam- Shaka year; Aaiyarattu- One thousand; Iru-nooru- two hundred; Enbattu-Irand Aavadu- and eighty two.

This indicates the Shaka year of etching the inscription bearing the divine order- i.e Shaka 1282.

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**References:**

- 1) Tracing of the Conjeevaram Inscription of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar; obtained from the North wall of the second enclosure of Lord Varadarāja temple, Kānchipuram; currently preserved in the archives of the Department of Epigraphical Studies, Archaeological Survey of India, Government of India. (<http://asi.nic.in/>)
- 2) Annual Report of Epigraphy 1915-1920; Department of Archeology, India and Government of Madras Publication.
- 3) Conjeevaram Inscription of Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar, English article by Śrī Ramanatha Ayyar, published in Epigraphia Indica, Volume XXV, Part vii, July 1940, pages 318 to 326.

## Appendix – 6

### The final message of Rāmānuja

Śrī Vēdānta Deśika records in the 17<sup>th</sup> Chapter of his Rahasya Traya Sāra that when Rāmānujāchārya was about to leave the mortal world, he noticed that his foremost disciples were plunged into excessive grief. Bidding them not to be overcome by sorrow at his leaving the mortal body, Rāmānujāchārya said that those who would even think of taking their own lives would no longer have any connection with him. His foremost disciples then begged him to advise them.

இவர் அருளிச் செய்தருளின வார்த்தை:

“1. ஒருவன் ப்ரபந்நனானால் அவனுடைய ஆத்ம யாத்ரை பகவதீனையாகையாலே அதில் அவனுக்கு அந்வயமில்லை; உண்டென்றிருந்தானாகில் ஆத்ம ஸமர்ப்பணம் பொய்யாமித்தனை. தேஹயாத்ரை கர்மாதீனையாகையாலே அதுக்குக் கரையவேண்டா; கரைந்தானாகில் நாஸ்திகனாமித்தனை. ஆகையால் உபய யாத்ரையையுங் கொண்டு இவனுக்கு கார்யமில்லை.

2. ஆனால் மநோவாக்காயங்களாகிற த்ரிவித-கரணங்களையுங் கொண்டு வேண்டிற்றுச் செய்து திரியவமையுமோ? என்னில், அது இவனுக்கு ஸ்வரூபமன்று; உபாயாம்சத்தில் அந்வயமில்லாவிட்டாலும், ப்ராப்யமான கைங்கர்யத்தாலே இவற்றை அந்வயிப்பிக்குமத்தனை.

3. அதில் இவனுக்கு இங்கிருந்த நாள் பண்ணலாம்  
கைங்கர்யம் அஞ்சு உண்டு. அவையாவன:- (1)  
பாஷ்யத்தை வாசித்து ப்ரவர்த்திப்பித்தல் (2) அதுக்கு  
யோக்யதையில்லையாகில் அருளிச் செயலைக் கேட்டு  
ப்ரவர்த்திப்பித்தல் (3) அதுக்கு யோக்யதையில்லையாகில்  
உகந்தருளின திவ்யதேசங்களுக்கு அமுதுபடி, சாத்துபடி,  
திருவிளக்குத் திருமாலைகளை உண்டாக்குதல் (4)  
அதுக்கு யோக்யதையில்லையாகில் த்வயத்தினுடைய  
அர்த்தானுசந்தானம் பண்ணுதல் (5) அதுக்கு யோக்யதை  
இல்லையாகில் என்னுடையவன் என்று  
அபிமானிருப்பானொரு ஸ்ரீவைஷ்ணவனுடைய  
அபிமானத்திலே ஒதுங்கி வர்த்தித்தல் செய்யலாம்

*‘Ivar aruliccheidu arulina vaartai’* “these were his words...”

Rāmānuja’s words:

*oruvan prapannanaanaal avanudaya atma yatrai bhagavad  
adhiinai aagayaale adil avanukku anvayamillai*

If one becomes a prapanna, the journey of his soul (to salvation) is completely under the control of Bhagavān and he himself has nothing to do with it.

*Undenrirundaanaagil atma samarpanam poyyaamittanai*

All he has to do is to offer his self to Bhagavān, to whom verily the self belongs, nothing more!

*Deha yaatrai karmaadhinai aagayaale adukku karayavenda*

The state of the (mortal) body is completely dependent upon past Karmas, there is no need for anxiety (with respect to this).

***Karaindanaagil naastikanaam ittanai***

If he continues to worry about this, then he is verily an atheist.

***Aagayaal ubhaya yaatraiyum kondu ivanukku kaaryamillai***

Therefore, in regard to this dual welfare (of the soul and the body), one has nothing to do.

***Aanaal mano vaak kaayangalaakira trividha karanangalaiyum kondu vendittru cheidu tiriyaavamayum ennai***

However, in that case, it may be asked whether a person can do whatever he wishes with his three faculties -mind, speech and body?

***adhu ivanukku swaroopamanru***

Such action is, however, not in accordance with his essential nature.

***upaayaamsattil anvayamillavittalum praapyamaana kainkaryattile ivarrai anvayappikkum attanai***

It is true that he has nothing more to perform with respect to the means (Upaya), yet he should direct these (three faculties) in the rendering of servitude (Kainkaryam) which becomes the goal of his existence.

***Adil ivanukku ingirundanaal pannalaam kainkaryam anju undu***

There are five kinds of service (Kainkaryam) he can render for the rest of his life.

1) ***bhaashyattai vaasittu pravartippittal***

He may study the Śrī Bhāshyam and propagate it.

2) ***adukku yogyataiyillayaagil aruliccheyalaikkettu pravartippittal***

If he is not qualified for that, he may study the works of the Âjvārs and propagate them.

- 3) *adukku yogyataiyillayaagil ugandarulina divya deshangelukku amudupadi shaattuppadi tiruvilakku tirumaalaigalai undaakkudal*

If he is not qualified for that, he can render service in one of the Divya Deshams by offering to the deity- food, lamp, flower garlands and other such offerings.

- 4) *adukku yogyataiyillayaagil dvayattinudaiya arthaanusandhaanam pannudal*

If he is not competent to do that, he may chant the Dvayam and contemplate on its inner meanings.

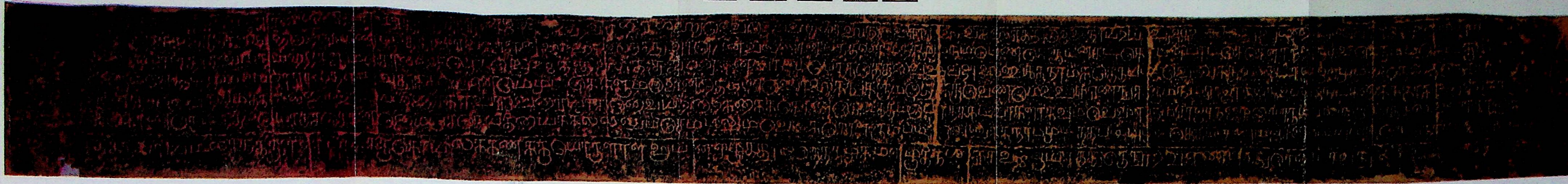
- 5) *adukku yogyataiyillayaagil ennudaiyavan endru abhimaanippaanoru Śrivaishnavanudaiya abhimaanattile odungi vartittal seyyalaam!*

If he is not competent for that also, he may then seek the good-will of some Śree Vaishnava who is well disposed towards him and considers him as his own, and spend the rest of his lifetime in the shadow of such a great-soul.

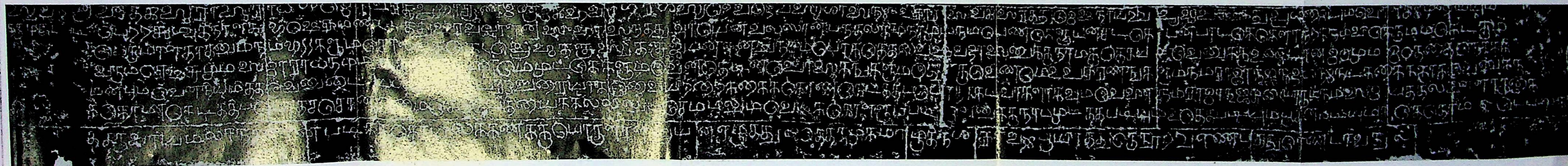
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Find spot : North wall of the second prākāra of Arulāla Perumāl Temple, Little Kanchipuram



The above inscription presented in black and white for better readability:



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## Appendix – 7

### Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi Matam

श्रीब्रह्मतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रपरकालगुरुपरंपरायै नमोनमः ।

śrībrahmatantrasvatantraparakālaguruparamparāyai namōnamah .

*"Obeisance to the glorious Guruparampara of  
Śri Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Matham!"*

### Śri Lakshmi Hayavadana Divya Pādukā Sevakas – the unbroken lineage

Śri Bhagavad Rāmānujāchārya (1017-1137 C.E.)

Blessed with the Archā of Lakshmi Hayagreeva by Goddess  
Saraswathi upon Āchārya's visit to the Shāradā Peetam

Also blessed with the honor of 'Śri Bhāshyakāra' by her

Śri Vishnuvardhana Bitti Devan and his wife Shantalaa Devi  
receive Vaishnava deeksha and Panchasamskāra from Āchārya  
Rāmānuja

Although Vaishnavās existed before this event, Rāmānuja Matam  
becomes now firmly established in Karmāta Desha!

Śri Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān, and four generations of his  
familial lineage until descendent Pundarikāksha (1137-1302  
C.E.)

C.E 1302 was the birth year of Tirumalai Śrinivasāchārya; also the  
year in which the Archā Vighraha of Lakshmi Hayagreeva was  
handed over to Vēdānta Deśika at Perumāl Koil, Kānchipuram

## **Śri Vêdānta Deśika (1269-1369 C.E.)**

**Paramāchārya for the Brahmatantra Swatantra Matam**

The Vêdānta Sutra Bhāshya, Gita Bhāshya, Bhagavad Vishayam, Rahasya Traya Sāra and other doctrinal tenets are expounded by Vêdānta Deśika.

Under the direct instructions and guidance of Vêdānta Deśika, Śri Matam established by Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar at Thooppul, Kānchipuram

### **1 Śri Perarulāla Jīyar Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi (1286-1386 C.E.)**

**Tirunakshatram: Purattāsi, Tiruvonam**

**Moola- Âchārya for the Brahmatantra Swatantra Matam**

Śri Bhāshya, Gita Bhāshya, Mantra Rahasya with Rahasya Traya Sāra come to this Jīyar directly from Vêdānta Deśika

The Bhagavad Vishayam comes to this Jīyar from Vêdānta Deśika through Kumāra Varadāchārya

Lord Varadarāja proclaims this Jīyar as Rāmānuja Matha Sthapanāchārya in 1359 C.E.

Archā Vighraha of Lakshmi Hayagreeva bestowed to this Jīyar by Vêdānta Deśika

Jīyar accepts the position of Śrikārya Dhurandhara of Tiruvēnkata mudayān at Periya Perumāl Koil, Tirumala

This Jīyar composed the Divya Sūri Stuti and other works

\*Fore hereon, dates in brackets indicate period of Nirvāha

### **2. Śri Vātsya Vêdānta Rāmānuja 'Perarulāla Aiyan Appai' Dviteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi (1386-1394 C.E.)**

Composed the 12,000 or Pannirāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam and other works Śrikārya Dhurandhara of Tirumala Periya Perumāl Koil Yaduraaya Maharaja received Panchasamskāra from this Jīyar.

**3. Śrī Śrinivasa Triteeya Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi (1394-1406 C.E.)**

Composed the 3,000 or Muvāyirappadi Guruparampara Prabhāvam and other works

Both the Śrī Matam branches at Tirumala and Thooppul, remain as important centers of activity.

The Wodeyars of Mahisurapura continue to serve the Śrī Matam through their association with its branch at Tirumala.

**4. Śrī Parakāla Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi (1406-1424 C.E.)**

**5. Śrī Vēdānta Rāmānuja Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi (1424-1440 C.E.)**

**6. Śrī Śrinivasa Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi (1440-1460 C.E.)**

**7. Śrī Nārāyana Yogindra Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi (1460-1482 C.E.)**

Śrī Mannaar Swāmi was blessed with the Panchasamskāras, Mantraartha Rahasyas and also with the Sannyāsāshrama from this Jīyar.

This Manaar Swāmi composed the work Jayanthi Nirnayam, based on which the annual date for Śrī Krishna Jayanthi is fixed even to this day.

**8. Śrī Rangaraja Yogindra Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi (1482-1498 C.E.)**

**9. Śrī Chaturtha Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi (1498-1517 C.E.)**

**10. Śrī Yatirāja Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi (1517-1535 C.E.)**

**11. Śrī Varada Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi (1535-1552 C.E.)**

**12. Śri Parāṅkusha Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi (1552-1567 C.E.)**

**13. Śri Kavitaarkika Simha Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi (1567-1583 C.E.)**

**14. Śri Vêdānta Yativarya Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi (1583-1607 C.E.)**

**15. Śri Jnanābdhi Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi (1607-1618 C.E.)**

This Jīyar composed the work Vijayindra Parājaya

Swāmi Ranga Rāmānuja Muni received the Sannyāsāshrama from this Jīyar. Swāmi Ranga Rāmānuja Muni went on to compose numerous works, including Bhāva Prakāshika, Dashopanishad Bhāshyam, Vishayavākya Deepika, Rāmānuja Siddhānta Sāra Sangraham, Nyāya Siddhānta Vyākhyānam, Bhagavad Vishaya Bhāshyam 9000 Padi and such others.

Śri Vātsya Ahobilāchāryar Swāmi received the Panchasamskāra and Mantārtha Rahasyas from this Jīyar. By the grace of this Jīyar, he composed the Nālāyira Taniyan Vyākhyāna Sangraham and other works.

Raja Wodeyar received Panchasamskāra from this Jīyar

The doctrine of Rāmānuja is re-established in Karnāta Desha.

**16. Śri Veeraraghava Yogindra Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi (1618-1640 C.E.)**

**17. Śri Varada Vêdānta Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi (1640-1652 C.E.):**

Śri Ranadheera Kanteerava Narasimha Raja Wodeyar received Panchasamskāra from this Jīyar

**18. Śri Varāha Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi (1652-1663 C.E.):**

Chikka Devarāja Wodeyar Maharaja received Panchasamskāra from this Jīyar

**19. Śrī Vêdānta Lakshmana Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi (1663-1673 C.E.)**

**20. Śrī Varada Vêdānta Yogindra Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi (1673-1677 C.E.)**

**21. Śrī Periya Parakāla 'Dodda Parakāla' (Mahā Parakāla) Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi (1677-1738 C.E.):**

Tirunakshatram: Vaishāka, Shukla, Tiruvādirai

Born as the son of Sri Srinivasa Mahadeśika, in the year Shaka 1578 (1655 C.E.), at Arakalgud village along the banks of river Hemāvathi in Karnāṭaka

He accepted Sannyāsāshrama from his own father (who was now Vêdānta Yogindra Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi) in the year Shaka 1600 (1677 C.E.)

Composed numerous works, including Nālāyira Diyya Prabandham Vyākhyānam, Deśika Prabandha Vyākhyānam, Yati Prativandana Khandanam, Âchārya Avatāra Ghattārtha, Parakāla Sthāna Paddhati, Mita Prakāshika, Sāra Sangraha and many others

Śrī Dodda Krishna Raja Wodeyar received Vaishnava Deeksha and Pancha Samskārās from this Jīyar

Śrī Matam moves from Tirumala to Śrirangapattanam, Mysore

This Swāmi completed sixty Chaturmāsya Sankalpams. Establishing the authority of the Grantha Śrī Rahasya Traya Sāra, this Swāmi showed the efficacy of Artha Prapatti!

From this point on, the title 'Parakāla' becomes integrally associated with the Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi Matam and with its Jīyars.

**22. Śrī Śrinivasa Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi (1738-1751 C.E.):**

Tirunakshatram: Pushya, Krittika

Accepted Sannyāsāshrama in the year Shaka 1661 (1738 C.E.)

Composed works such as Lakshmyopāyatva Deepa, Nyāsa Prakāshika, Nyāsa Prakāshika Vivrithi, Parakāla Mangalam, Parakāla Vaibhava Prakāshika Stotram and many others

Completed fourteen Chaturmāsya Sankalpams

**23. Śri Vêdānta Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi (1751-1770 C.E.):**

Born along the banks of river Jayamangala, in Honavanapalli, Shaka year 1635 (1712 C.E.), in the lineage of Kaushika Gotra

Accepted Sannyāsāshrama from Śri Śrinivasa Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi

Completed twenty Chaturmāsya Sankalpams

**24. Śri Abhinava Śrinivasa Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi (1770-1772 C.E.):**

Born at TiruNārāyana puram in Shaka 1627

Accepted Sannyāsāshrama from Vêdānta Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi in the year Shaka 1693 (1770 C.E.)

**25. Śri Rāmānuja Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi (1772-1810 C.E.):**

Tirunakshatram: Mesha, Rohini

Born in the village of Bagepalli, Shaka year 1632 (1709 C.E.), in the famed Koundinya Gotra as the son of Tirumalācharya

Obtained Panchasamskāra and Matropadesha from Śri Tirumalai Krishnamācharya, a direct disciple of Śri Periya Parakāla Swāmi

Remained a Brahmacharin for the first 24 years of his life and then directly entered Sannyāsāshrama by the grace of Śri Śrinivasa Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi

Ascended to the Maha Peetam of the Śri Matam after 38 Chaturmāsya Sankalpams at the age of 62 years

Maha Matrashree Lakshmammani, the Maharani of the Mysore kingdom received Vaishnava deeksha and Panchasamskāra from this Jīyar

Śrī Matam had to be shifted to Tirupathi for a brief period due to the wars. After the fall of Śrīrangapattanam in 1799 C.E., this Jīyar returned to crown the very young Śrī Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar as the Maharaja of Mahisurapura (Mysore)

This Jīyar advised Diwan Purnaiah to build the temple of Swāmi Sveta Varaha at Mysore. This location was to become the future capital of the Mysore kingdom

Adorned the Śrī Peetam to complete another 39 Chaturmāsya Sankaplams. He lived for 102 years!

## **26. Śrī Ghantāvatāra Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi (1810-1837 C.E.):**

Born at Nallur, along the banks of river Pinākini, in Shaka 1679 (1756 C.E.), in the lineage of the famed Śrīvathsa Gotra- he was named as Krishnamacharya.

Was initiated into Sannyāsāshrama by Śrī Rāmānuja Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi in the year 1810 C.E.; and ascended the Śrī Peetam of the Matam in the same year

In virtue, this Jīyar was like the re-incarnation of Vēdānta Deśika, hence the title 'Ghantāvatāra' was bestowed upon him.

Śrī Matam moves to Tirunārāyanapuram. Swāmi undertakes a Divya Desha Yatra establishing the glory of the Śrī Matam throughout the southern kingdoms, and then resides in Tirunārāyanapuram for many years

Thooppul, Tirumala, Śrīrangapattanam, Tirunārāyanapuram and Mahisurapuram become important branches of the Śrī Matam

Karnāta Simhāsanaadhishvara Sarvabhauma Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar receives Vaishnava deeksha and Panchasamskāra from this Jīyar

This Jīyar completed 26 Chaturmāsya Sankaplams

## **27. Śrī Vêdānta Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi (1829-1836 C.E.):**

**Tirunakshatram:** Shrāvana, Shukla, Phālguni

Born in Shaka year 1714 (1791 C.E.) at Nallur along the banks of river Pinākini

He was born in the lineage of the great Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān, as the son of Śrī Śrinivasācharya. He was named Rāghavāchariar.

He ascended the Maha Peetam after accepting Sannyāsāshrama in the year 1829 C.E. when Śrī Ghantāvatāra Swāmi took to brief illness

He completed 7 Chaturmāsya Sankaplams residing at Tirunārāyanapuram and Mahisurapuram

He ascended to the supreme realm even while Śrī Ghantāvatāra Swāmi was adorning the Śrī Peetam

## **28. Śrī Śrinivasa Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi (1836-1861 C.E.):**

**Tirunakshatram:** Ashāda, Shukla/Poornima, Poorāda

He was born in the lineage of the great Tirukkurukai Pirān Pillān, in the Shaka year 1713 (1790 C.E.), with the name Krishnamacharya.

Upon the instruction of Śrī Ghantāvatāra Swāmi, he obtained initiation into Sannyāsāshrama from Vêdānta Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi in the year 1836 C.E. In the same year, he asended the Śrī Peetam.

For a period of eight glorious days, at this point, Śrī Matam had three Acharyas serving the Maha Peetam- Śrī Ghantāvatāra Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi, Śrī Vêdānta Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi and Śrī Śrinivasa Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi.

Śrī Śrinivasa Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi performed UbhayaVêdānta pravachanam at Tirunārāyanapuram and Mahisurapuram (Mysore) for many years

He taught the Gita Bhāshya and Bhagavad Vishayam to Śrī Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar

Undertook a victorious tour all over the country establishing the doctrine of Rāmānuja. This is well recorded in the work Parakāla Guru Vijaya Champu

This Jiyar completed 26 Chaturmāsya Sankaplams.

**29. Śrī Śrinivasa Desikendra Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi (1861-1873 C.E.):**

Tirunakshatram: Mārgashirsa, Shukla, Asvini

Born along the banks of river Pinākini, in Shaka 1725 (1802 C.E.), in the lineage of the Kidāmbi family of Atreya Gotra. He was the son of Śrī Nrusimharangāchār.

Obtained initiation into Sannyāsāshrama from Śrī Śrinivasa Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi in the year 1861 C.E.

Performed Bhagavad Vishayam Upanyasams at various places

Composed Dhatu Vritti Sangraham, Alankāra Sangraham, Sudhi Vilochana Sangraham, Purva Prayoga Sangraham and other works

Completed 13 Chaturmāsya Sankaplams residing at the Śrī Matams in Tirunārāyanapuram, Mahisurapuram and Śrīrangapattanam.

**30. Śrī Ranganātha Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi (1873-1885 C.E.):**

Tirunakshatram: Vaishāka, Vishāka, Shukla/Poornima

He was born along the banks of river Bāhuda, at a village called Vāvillpādu, in Shaka 1735 (1812 C.E.), in the lineage of Vādhula Gotra.

Ascended the Maha Peetam in the year 1873 C.E after obtaining initiation into Sannyāsāshrama from Śrī Śrinivasa Desikendra Swāmi.

He composed Śrī Rahasya Traya Saara Sangraham in Śloka format, Tapa Chakrāṅkhana Pramāna Vritti, Sudarshana Vāda, Purusha Sukta Bhāshya and many other works dealing with the concept of Nyāya.

Śri Chamarajendra Wodeyar received Vaishnava deeksha and Panchasamskāra from this Jīyar.

This Jīyar completed 13 Chaturmāsya Sankaplam.

**31. Śri Krishna Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi (1885-1915 C.E.):**

Tirunakshatram: Jyeshta, Tiruvona, Krishna Panchami

He was born in the Shaka year 1762 (1839 C.E.) by the grace of Śri Śrinivasa Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi. Therefore this child was given the purvāshrama name of Śrinivasa Brahmatantra Swatantra Swāmi- Krishnamacharya.

Ascended the Maha Peetam in the year 1885 C.E. To the Matam, he brought along with him the Archāvighraha of Lakshmi Nārāyana, which was being worshipped in his familial lineage.

He has composed 67 major Śri Granthams. The Parakāla Guru Vijaya Champu describing the life of the 28th Jīyar is a work that this Swāmi composed in his Purva ashramam. The achievements of this Jīyar are too numerous to be recounted within the scope of the current work.

Maha Matāshri Śri Maharani Vanivilasam Ammanni (the wife of Chamarajendra Wodeyar) received Bharanyaasam at the feet of this Jīyar.

Her son Śri Krishna Raja Wodeyar the IV received Vaishnava deeksha and Panchasamskāra from this Jīyar

This Jīyar completed 30 Chaturmāsya Sankaplam.

**32. Śri Vāgeesha Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi (1915-1925 C.E.)**

**33. Śri Abhinava Ranganātha Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi (1925-1967 C.E.):**

Tirunakshatram: Aashāda, Punarvasu

Maharaja Śri Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar and Maharaja Śri Jayachamarajendra Wodeyar Bahadur both receive Vaishnava deeksha and Panchasamskāra from this Jīyar

**34. Śrī Abhinava Śrinivasa Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi (1967-1972 C.E.)**

**35. Śrī Abhinava Rāmānuja Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi (1971-1992 C.E.)**

**36. Śrī Abhinava Vāgeesha Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakāla Swāmi**

Tirunakshatram: Mesha, Revathi

Current Âchārya; ascended the Maha Peetam in the year 1992 C.E.

Note: All Shaka years are given as 'current' shaka years.

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## Appendix - 8

### Sankirtanas on the importance of Acharya/Guru

Tāllapāka Annamāchārya Sankirtana

Paramayogishvarula Paddhati

Rāga: Bhupalam

Copper Plate: #237

परमयोगीश्वरुल पद्धति इदि  
धरणिलो विवेकुलु दलपोसुकौनुट ॥

paramayōgīśvarula paddhati idi  
dharanīlō vivēkulu dalapōsukonuṭa

*This is the path shown by 'Parama Yogis',  
which wise ones upon this earth accept and follow!*

मोदलनात्मज्ञानमु तेलिसि पिम्मट  
हृदयमुलोनिहरिनेरुंगुट ।  
वुदुटैनयिंद्रियाल नोडिसि वञ्चुकौनुट  
गुदिगोन्नतनलो कोरिके लुडुगुट ॥

modalanātmajñānamu telisi pimmaṭa  
hṛdayamulōniharineruṅuṭa  
vuduṭainayindriyāla nōḍisi vaṇcukōnuṭa  
gudigōnnatanalō kōrike luḍuguṭa

*First, comprehending the knowledge of the inner-self,  
and then becoming acquainted with Lord Hari within ones heart!  
Gaining tight control over the over-powering senses,  
and relenquishing all deep seated inner desires!*

तनपुण्यफलमुलु दैवमुकोसगुट  
पनिवडि यतनिपै भक्तिचेसुट ।

तनिवितो निरंतर ध्यानयोगपरुंडौट  
मनसुलो ब्रकृतिसम्मंधमु मरचुट ॥

tanapūṇyaphalamulu daivamukōsaguṭa  
panivaḍi yatanipai bhakticēsuṭa  
tanivitō nirantara dhyānayōgaparuṇḍauṭa  
manasulō brakṛtisammandhamu maracuṭa

*Offering the fruits of one's meritorious deeds to the Lord,  
and purposefully engaging oneself in His devotion!  
Joyously engaging in ceaseless meditation (Dhyāna) upon Him,  
after having forgotten in the mind all connections with Prakriti!*

नडुम नडुम विज्ञानपुकथलु विनुट  
चिडुमुडि नाचार्यसेवसेयुट ।  
येडयक श्रीवेंकटेशुपै भारमुवेसि  
कडु वैष्णवुलकृप गलिगि सुखिंचुट ॥

naḍuma naḍuma vijñānapukathalu vinuṭa  
ciḍumuḍi nācāryasēvasēyuṭa  
yeḍayaka śrīvēṅkaṭēsupai bhāramuvēsi  
kaḍu vaiṣṇavulakṛpa galigi sukhiñcuṭa

*Listening intermittently to discourses that pertain to special knowledge,  
performing servitude to one's Āchārya with utmost love, entrusting then  
one's burdens upon Lord Śrī Venkatesha (Bharanyāsam), and having  
procured the grace of Śree Vaishnavas, one finally attains prosperity!*

*(This is the path shown by 'Parama Yogis',  
which wise ones upon this earth accept and follow!)*

**Purport:**

In this Sankirtana, Annamāchārya describes 'Prāpti Virodhi' and 'Prāpti Upāyam'. Prāpti Virodhis are impediments or hinderances that obstruct attainment of Moksha. The first is called 'Avidya' or ignorance, which can lead to two types of illusion- one of identity between the body and the soul, and second - a sense of autonomy or independance of the soul. Both types of illusion prevent one from understanding the true nature of Lord Hari. While the soul is different from the body, it remains ever dependant upon the inner-most Supreme self. One way to cross this impediment of Avidya is to follow the path of 'Jnana Yoga'.

The other impediments discussed are those of 'Karma' and Vasanās'. 'Vasanās' are subtle impressions that are tied to the soul from is numerous previous experiences, while 'Karma' refers to the limitless accumulation of attachments - good and bad, birth after birth. The only way of transgressing these impediments is by the practice of 'Karma Yoga', where one controls indulgence in sensual objects by means of mastery over the senses, and dedicates the fruits of all meritorious actions to the Supreme Lord!

The ultimate goal is attained however only after one overcomes a major hurdle- called 'Prakriti Sambandham'. Prakriti Sambandham is the state attained by the Jiva for having transgressed the wish of Bhagavān from time immemorial. Prakriti Sambandham means the association of the individual soul with matter. Such association brings about a connection between the body and soul on one hand, and the body with the senses on the other hand. These connections link the soul to external matter through the physical body, the senses playing a powerful role in the constant desire to indulge in sense objects. Prakriti Sambandham is therefore the root cause for Vasanās and also for accumulation of Karma. The practice of Jnana Yoga or Karma yoga helps overcome this major hurdle Prakriti Sambandham and finally one can attain Para-Bhakti. This leads to the practice of Bhakti yoga- the attainment of a state where there is incessant meditaion in the form of highest love to the Supreme Brahman (Dhyāna Yoga), like the un-interrupted flow of oil, ultimately leading to Moksha.

But it must be quickly added that the above mentioned path is not suitable for two reasons- not everyone is qualified for the practice of Bhakti, and

the attainment of Moksha is only after much delay even in case of realized souls who are competent to practice Bhakti.

Therefore, the *only* way by which this chief hinderance 'Prakriti Sambandham'- the root cause of the endless chain of suffering - can be removed is by adopting the path of Sharanāgathi! This is the Prāpti Upāyam, '*the*' means to attain Moksha! This applies to those individuals who may resort to Prapatti as an adjunct to Bhakti, and to those individuals who resort to Prapatti as the sole means. Along the lines of Swāmi Vēdānta Deśika's explanation in his Rahasya Traya Sāra (Chapter 4), Annamāchārya gives the nectarine teaching of Sharanāgathi in the last stanza of this Sankirtana.

To get to the performance of Sharanāgathi requires one to first develop a desire to attain the feet of the Lord. This is brought about by listening, even intermittently; to discourses that speak of Lord's true glory, His divine nature, His Sovereign Overlordship. Listening to such discourses pertaining to the special knowledge leads to Virāgya in some measure. Such a state leads to the desire to attain the Lord.

Once such a desire to reach Him arises, the Lord bestows the benevolent glance that begets one the grace of an Âchārya. Through the grace of a worthy Âchārya, the disciple begins to acquire the knowledge of the three Māntras, the three truths, the true nature of the Lord of Śree who is the ultimate end, and the means and ways to attain Him. Serving the feet of the Âchārya, one then performs Prapatti to Śrīman Nārāyana. The burden of deliverance is placed at the feet of the Lord- this is called 'Bhāra Nyāsa'. Following the performance of such Sharanāgathi, for as long as one lives in this mortal world thereafter, one should continue to serve the Lord and His devotees and thereby secure the protective grace of Śree Vaishnavās. Having lived thus, one attains the ultimate end- Moksha, rather efficaciously!

As mentioned earlier, in all endeavors to reach the Supreme Bhagavān Śrīman Nārāyana, servitude to an Âchārya is but essential! Annamāchārya impresses upon the same in this Sankirtana!

## Purandara Dāsa Kirtana

Guruvina Gulama

Rāga: Pantuvarali

गुरुविनगुलामनागुव तनक

दोरैयदण्ण मुकुति ।

guruvinagulāmanāguva tanaka

doreyadaṇṇa mukuti

*Until you becomes the servant of your Guru,  
O dear one, you will not attain Moksha!*

परिपरिशास्त्रवनेकवनोदि

व्यर्थवायितु भकुति ॥

paripariśāstravanēkavanōdi

vyarthavāyitu bhakuti

*Repeated reading of various scriptures  
only makes devotion wasteful!  
(Until you become the servant of your Guru)*

आरुशास्त्रवनोदिदरिल्ल मू-

रारु पुराणव मुगिसिदरिल्ल ।

सारिसज्जनर संगव माडदे

धीरनागि ता मेरेदरे इल्ल ॥

āruśāstravanōdidarilla mū

rāru purāṇava mugisidarilla

sārisajjanara saṅgava māḍade

dhīranāgi tā meredare illa

*Not if one masters the six-shāstras,  
Not if one reads all of the eighteen Puranas!  
Without indulging in the company of devotees, if one roams  
around thinking himself to be great, there is no Moksha!*

कोरळोळु मालेय धरिसिदरिल्ल  
बेरळोळु जपमणि ऐणिसिदरिल्ल ।  
मरुळनंते शरीरके बूदिय  
ओरसिकोंडु ता तिरुगिदरिल्ल ॥

koraḷoḷu māleya dharisidarilla  
beraḷoḷu japamaṇi eṇisidarilla  
maruḷanante śarīrake būdiya  
orasikoṇḍu tā tirugidarilla

*Not if one wears the sacred beads around the neck,  
Not if one counts the beads with the fingers while chanting!  
Even if one roams around like a mad person,  
besmearing oneself with ash, there is no Moksha!*

नारिय भोग अळिसिदरिल्ल  
शरीरके सुखव बिडिसिदरिल्ल ।  
नारद वरद श्रीपुरंदर विठलन  
मरेयदे मनदोळु बैरैयुव तनक ॥

nāriya bhōga aḷisidarilla  
śarīrake sukhava biḍisidarilla  
nārada varada śrīpurandara viṭhalana  
mareyade manadoḷu bereyuva tanaka

*Not if one abstains from the sensual pleasure of women,  
Not if one refrains from the pleasures of the mortal body!  
Until one firmly and incessantly plants in his mind  
Lord Śrī Purandara Vittala, the benefactor of Nārada!  
(Until you become the servant of your Guru!)*

**Purport:**

In this Kirtana, Purandara Dāsa indicates the importance of the role of a Guru in securing Moksha for an aspirant. Without becoming a slave of the Guru, it is impossible to attain Moksha, he says! Gulama means a slave; becoming a slave of the Guru means to offer unconditional servitude to one's Guru.

Without the guidance of a Guru, repeated reading of the scriptures is a waste. Even if one completes the reading of eighteen Purāṇās (Mur-āru literally means  $6 \times 3 = 18$  Mahapuranas), even if one attains mastery over the six systems of philosophy, without the grace of the Guru and without 'Sajjana Sanga'- contact with the assemblage or congregation of Vaishnavās, it is impossible to attain Moksha. If one thinks that he alone is great and refrains from bowing down to the feet of the devotees of the Lord, such a 'bold' person who thinks that he knows everything can never attain Moksha!

What if one wears the sacred Tulasi or the lotus beads around the neck? What if one constantly chants a mantra? What if one decks his body with insignia of various Gods? What if one practices Brahmacharya or accepts Sannyasa to abstain from sensual pleasures? Without resorting to the feet of the Guru, there can be no Moksha. Even Nārada, who attained Lord Śrīman Nārāyaṇa, did so only because he associated with devotees and then sought refuge in his Guru - Brahma! Therefore, until one begets the grace of a Guru and then seeks Lord Śrī Purandara Vittala, there can be no Moksha!

Again, it is only the grace of an Âchārya that facilitates the bestowal of fruits in the case of all endeavors adopted to reach the Supreme Bhagavān Śrīman Nārāyaṇa! Purandara Dāsa conveys the very same teaching in this Kirtana!

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आचार्यस्य प्रसादेन मम सर्वमभीप्सितम् ।  
प्राप्नुयामिति विश्वासो यस्यास्ति स सुखी भवेत् ॥

ācāryasya prasādēna mama sarvamabhīpsitam.  
prāpnuyāmiti viśvāsō yasyāsti sa sukhī bhavēt ..

*"One who sincerely believes that the attainment of  
all desires and every other thing that has also been  
obtained are purely through the grace of one's  
Āchārya, such a person alone remains happy forever!"*

*We surrender at the lotus feet of our Āchārya  
Śrīmad Abhinava Vāgeesha Brahmatantra Swatantra Jīyar!  
It is the abounding cool shade under his lotus feet  
that protects us from the scorching heat of Samsāra!*

*Āchārya Tiruvadigale Sharnam //*









ISBN 81-89650-27-0



Printed in India  
Navbharath Press, Bangalore - 560 012  
navbarat@gmail.com; Ph: +91-80-2355-1142